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**Sustainable Community Food Initiative  
Montgomery County, Maryland**

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#### Key for Abbreviated References to the Present Report:

#### **References to *Part Two: Components of the Sustainable Community Food Initiative*.**

-Refer to the corresponding section (see the table of Contents) of **Part Two** of this report.

e.g. [III.B.2]= See Part Two, section III. Marketing and Distribution> B. Initiatives> 2. Initiative II. CSA Network.

[II.]= See Part Two, section II. Food Innovation Center.

#### **References to *Part Four: Appendices***

Appendix II. BP=Best Practice; e.g. [BP6, p. ] =Refer to Appendix II< Best Practice 6, on page \_\_.

Appendix III. INT=Interview Notes; e.g. [INT 4, p. ]=Refer to Appendix III< Interview Notes 4, on page\_\_.

Appendix IV. R=Additional Resources; e.g. [R1, p. \_]= See Appendix IV< 1.

Agricultural Development Resources in for a list of other programs/resources.

## **PART ONE. INTRODUCTION**

### **I. Imagine: Montgomery County as the Nation's Model Sustainable Community Food System**

One of the most important challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Montgomery County and around the globe will be the creation of sustainable community food systems where more healthy food is locally produced, distributed, consumed, and composted in an efficient and environmentally sustainable way that promotes public health through improved eating habits and unites the rural and suburban/urban communities around food. By producing, distributing, and consuming more food locally and organically, we can reduce the greenhouse gas emissions caused by shipping food long distances,<sup>1</sup> reduce the use of harmful pesticides and fertilizers,<sup>2</sup> enjoy a wider variety of nutritious fresh local foods, and fight childhood obesity by providing more healthy food to communities with limited access to healthy foods.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, we can ensure the future economic and “food security” of Montgomery County even as the supply of fossil fuels dwindles and the oil-dependent industrial farms can no longer produce and distribute food at their current capacity.

On March 25, 2010, the Montgomery County Green Economy Task Force (GETF) submitted to County Executive Ike Leggett its recommendations for “growing a sustainable economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century...[achieving] green job growth...increased revenue and innovation, while enjoying a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions and natural resource consumption.” Among the recommendations was the creation of a “small farm incubator” extending the County’s award-winning business incubator model to support organic farming in the Agricultural and Open Space Reserve and to encourage local consumption. On May 27, 2010, the Montgomery County Planning Board selected the Darby Hub, a 127-acre plot of land in the Woodstock Special Park in the Ag Reserve as the proposed location for the farm incubator.

Now fast forward to 2016 and imagine that First Lady Michelle Obama, in her final report to the nation on her nutrition and health initiatives, cites Montgomery County as the nation’s model sustainable community food system. Imagine that a

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<sup>1</sup> The average piece of packaged food currently travels 1200 to 1500 miles before we eat it (GETF, p.23).

<sup>2</sup> The production of pesticides and fertilizers currently accounts for 40% of the climate-changing fossil fuels used in the industrial food production according to a University of Michigan study cited in the GETF.

<sup>3</sup> According to a February 2010 report published by the Farmers’ Legal Action Group, “[t]here is strong evidence that limited access to and consumption of fruits and vegetables contributes to childhood obesity.” The Surgeon General’s 2010 “Vision for a Healthy and Fit Nation” calls childhood obesity “a critical threat to public health.”

“Sustainable Community Food Initiative” has transformed the way food is grown, processed, distributed, and consumed in Montgomery County. Imagine Montgomery County leads the nation in sustainable and organic agriculture and healthy local eating. Imagine that the initiative includes a Sustainable Farm Viability Enhancement Program and a farm incubator that has expanded local sustainable agricultural production. A Food Innovation Center (FIC) that includes a commercial kitchen incubator and a food processing facility to support local businesses that produce healthy natural “value-added” foods for County residents has been operating as part of this initiative. Imagine a local/healthy food education campaign has increased public awareness about the value of Buying Montgomery and Eating Healthy.

Imagine that the farm incubator proposed by GETF is operating and hosts a handful of farms following organic farming principles producing a diversity of crops. The youngest farms are “incubators” that receive subsidized rates on land and equipment and guidance from the successful mature “mentor” farms. Some mentor farms, having successfully developed a business plan, brand, and established a customer base as incubators, have left the incubator to start their own farms in the Reserve. The Montgomery Countryside Alliance and staff at Park and Planning help match these farmers with suitable and affordable land in the Reserve. Meanwhile, recent graduates of the Montgomery County Organic Farm School’s workforce development programs eagerly submit their applications, hoping to replace the exiting farms and become the next incubators. Imagine that the Reserve is blossoming as a community of farmers dedicated to providing fresh organic food to the people of Montgomery County has emerged and begun to reach a critical mass.

Imagine that, in the words of Daniel Nachtigal of Through the Kitchen Door, the initiative “uses food as the fuel for economic development, promoting entrepreneurship and workforce training programs.” Imagine that hundreds of immigrant workers are recruited from day labor sites to participate in the Initiative’s Sustainable Agriculture Workforce Development Program through a partnership with CASA de Maryland. In addition to new job opportunities in the Reserve, imagine that the Food Innovation Center is providing intensive training/education program for interested farmers, offering a mix of on-farm learning and classroom instruction in partnership with UMD’s Extension Services. Participants are learning organic farming, marketing, and business management skills with the hope of starting their own incubator farms upon graduation.

Imagine that off the farms, the County's commercial kitchen incubator, a component of the Food Innovation Center, is also flourishing under the leadership of Through the Kitchen Door. Hundreds of up-and-coming chefs and food workers are being trained and are growing their healthy food businesses, using fresh, organic, high-quality ingredients from Montgomery County farms. Imagine a catering business within the FIC that is serving healthy food using local ingredients to local businesses and County offices. Imagine a healthy food-processing center, also within the Food Innovation Center, that is providing facilities for farmers and cooks to turn farmers' "seconds" (food that isn't up to farmers markets' standards because it might be spotted or odd-shaped, even though it tastes fine and is perfectly safe to eat) and food that does not sell into "value-added" products. Imagine that a "Take Stock" program is using organic vegetables and unused bones from locally slaughtered animals to produce healthy "core foods" such as organic stocks and sauces that people are using to cook delicious all-natural healthy meals at home.

Imagine that the previously unmet demand for locally produced food is being satisfied while new demand is being generated from diverse groups of all socio-economic backgrounds as the Buy Montgomery and Eat Healthy movement grows. Imagine that thousands of County residents, as members of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, are picking up their shares from local pick-up sites or right from the farms. Moreover, tours of Montgomery County farms have increased, and hundreds of families visit the Organic Farm School to see the farms and participate in weekly public clinics and workshops. Imagine that farmers' markets have expanded and many new ones have sprung up throughout the County, including "mobile markets" and farm stands that drive to low-income/public housing neighborhoods, making it practical for more people to Buy Montgomery and Eat Healthy. Imagine a Montgomery County Healthy Food Hub that acts as a "local foods broker," linking farmers to new markets by aggregating, transporting, storing, and distributing their products, increasing the demand for local food from small and mid-sized producers.

Imagine a Community Food Education Program led by Through the Kitchen Door that offers healthy cooking lessons in community kitchens in schools and religious congregations so Montgomery County families can enjoy simple, affordable home-cooked meals using local produce. Imagine that the Community Food Education Program is working with Montgomery County's diverse ethnic community to expand the range of food choices for all County residents. Imagine that shoppers at major grocery chains like Whole Foods, Giant, Safeway, Trader

Joe's, and ethnic supermarkets find sizable special sections just for foods produced here in Montgomery County. Our neighbors in need benefit as Manna and other distributors of food gain access to the increased supply of local fruits and vegetables.

Imagine that Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has partnered with the Healthy Food Hub to provide healthy school meals with food from County farms and kitchens and encourage good eating habits. Imagine that the MCPS curriculum complements the school meal reform, as kids learn about the benefits of Buying Montgomery and Eating Healthy in the classroom, school gardens, and school kitchens. Imagine Montgomery County is on course to improve childhood obesity rates to be some of the lowest in the nation. Imagine that County residents' attitudes towards food have shifted, and choosing healthy, local, organic foods has become a conscious part of people's every day life.

Imagine hundreds of home, school, and community gardens across Montgomery County have become another indicator of how the Initiative has transformed the County's food culture.

Imagine that greenhouse gas emissions and the harmful effects of pesticides have declined as buying local from organically principled County farms has been significantly reduced the transportation of food to County residents. Meanwhile the local economy has surged as large number of "green" food-related jobs that have been created.

## **PART TWO. COMPONENTS OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM INITIATIVE**

To realize this vision and create a sustainable community food system, the County must:

1. Support the growth of local sustainable farms that follow organic principles.
2. Support the development of local food processing and “value-added” products.
3. Connect the local food supply with demand by improving the marketing and distribution of local food.
4. Increase the demand for healthy, local and organic food by expanding existing markets, creating new ones, and educating the public about the value of sustainable agriculture, eating healthy and local foods, and how to buy and use/cook these foods.

So far, the County has taken a major step forward in addressing the need for increased local agriculture by proposing a farm incubator. The present report builds on the progress made by the GETF and MNCPPC by proposing additional ways for Montgomery County to support the growth of local agriculture and by addressing the other major issues involved in the creation of a healthy sustainable community food system.

### **I. Montgomery County Sustainable Farms Development Initiatives** [Increasing Supply of Local Sustainably Grown Produce and Meat]

#### **A. Background**

The first step that should be taken to create a sustainable community food system in Montgomery County is to promote agricultural initiatives to increase the



amount of local organic food available to consumers and help make Montgomery County farms more profitable so local farmers can continue farming for a living. Research shows that demand for local food in the D.C. metropolitan area currently exceeds the existing supply (GETF report, p.23).

According to the 2009 Montgomery County Climate Protection Plan (Recommendation F&A-11), residents should eat more local produce and are willing to pay a premium for local food (Climate Protection Plan, p. 86-87). Currently, only about 30 out of the County's 577 farms produce table food "utilizing about 3,000 acres, or four percent of the 75,000 acres of farmland in the County" (Climate Protection Plan, p.87). From this data it is clear that there is great potential for expanding table food production in the Ag Reserve. The same Recommendation also states "[t]he County should seek to both increase opportunities for prospective new fruit and vegetables and address the barriers that limit local food production among existing farmers" (Climate Protection Plan, p. 87).

**Mission:** To increase the supply of locally and sustainably grown (especially organic) produce and enhance the financial and environmental sustainability of Montgomery County farms.

**B. The MC Sustainable Farms Development Initiatives** that follow are a critical piece of the broader MC Sustainable Community Food Initiative as they aim to act on Recommendation F&A-11 and achieve the Mission stated above.

- 1. Initiative I. Montgomery County Sustainable Farm Incubator**
- 2. Initiative II. Montgomery County Sustainable Farm Viability Enhancement Initiative**
- 3. Initiative III. Sustainable Agriculture Workforce Development: Montgomery County Organic Farm School**
- 4. Initiative IV. Sustainable Farm Workforce Coordinator**

#### **1. Initiative I. Montgomery County Sustainable Farm Incubator**

**Purpose:** The MC Sustainable Farm Incubator would assist graduates of the MC Organic Farm School and other qualified applicants who want to start organic farming businesses in Montgomery County and guide them as they grow their farms into successful independent businesses.

*Model Programs:* Intervale Farms Program [BP 1, p. 35 ], ALBA [BP 2, p. 39], [R1, p. 113]

*Proposed Program Overview:*

Montgomery County has had success growing small businesses through the support of the County's business incubator network. The GETF has suggested this model as a first step toward growing a sustainable "green" economy (GETF Report, p.23).

The greatest barriers that new farmers in Montgomery County face are accessing affordable farmland and capital, and providing infrastructure and effective irrigation systems. Modeled after the Intervale Center's Farms Program (FP) [BP 1], the Sustainable Farm Incubator would help farmers cope with these challenges by leasing land at a reduced rate to new farmers, providing shared equipment (that farmers could rent per use) and storage facilities, infrastructure, deer fencing, and a well for irrigation.

The Intervale Center is a non-profit that has been incredibly successful in creating a thriving community of 12-13 independent for-profit organic "incubator" farms on 120 acres in Burlington, VT. Collectively, Intervale farms produce an impressive 600,000 to 1,000,000 lbs. of food each year, providing 7% of Burlington's fresh food. Many of Vermont's organic farmers started out in Intervale's FP and then left and settled elsewhere where they continue producing food for the community.

As in the Intervale, farmers in the MC Sustainable Farm Incubator would receive continued support in modifying their business plans and technical assistance as needed. Farms would progress through a series of three stages:

a) In the Incubator stage, young farms could receive a one-year lease on a small piece of land, perhaps one acre at a heavily subsidized rate. If the incubator farm business is doing well after one year and has complied with organic land use standards and other regulations, then the farm may apply to renew the lease and may seek to expand. Incubator farmers would participate in occasional workshops and would have regular meetings with staff to review and evaluate their business operations. Incubator farms would be paired with a mature mentor farm that helps out the incubator farm and gives advice and support.

b) After about three years, farmers will have developed a good sense for the market and established a solid customer base. If they choose to remain in the Incubator as "Enterprise" level farmers, they will start paying higher rates on land, equipment, and other services. Having proven their ability as incubator farmers, Enterprise farmers would be eligible for two-year leases and may expand their farms.

c) After five years or so, farmers will become Mentor farms and will pay full price for Incubator land and services if they choose to stay. Mentor farms will be eligible

for long-term leases and will help the new entering Incubator farms develop. Some farmers may want to buy or lease their own land elsewhere in the Reserve. Park & Planning staff and the Montgomery Countryside Alliance [INT 2] could assist exiting farmers with locating suitable land. The Sustainable Farm Network (*Ag Initiative II, below*) would help farmers transition and provide continuing support as farmers grow their businesses. The Food Hub could provide marketing assistance, storage, and distribution.

*Applicant Eligibility:* Prerequisites for applying would include a crop plan, a viable business plan, and a thorough understanding of organic farming principles as proven by successful completion of a MC Organic Farm School (OFS) course (*Ag Initiative III*) or else passage of a comprehensive entrance exam (for applicants who did not graduate from OFS).

*Potential Sites:* The May 27, 2010 Planning Board staff memo ([http://www.montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda/2010/documents/20100527\\_Roundtable\\_Ag\\_Incubator.pdf](http://www.montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda/2010/documents/20100527_Roundtable_Ag_Incubator.pdf)) describes three proposed locations or “hubs” where the farm incubator could be located. According to the memo, each hub contains several land sites and “an underutilized cultural or historic buildings owned by the Department [MC-MNCPPC] that could serve as administrative offices and/or housing for farmers with a five mile radius drawn around it. The five mile radius represents the maximum distance farmers would feel comfortable sharing farming equipment and driving the equipment along roads” (MC-MNCPPC memo, p. 7). The three hubs identified were: 1. The *Darby Hub* in the Woodstock Equestrian Park, by the historic Darby House. 2. The *Holland Hub*, which could use land in the Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and the historic Holland/Red Door Store, and 3. The *Watkins Hub* in the eastern part of Ovid Hazen Wells Park in Clarksburg, by the Oliver Watkins House. The same memo describes why the Woodstock Special Park was chosen: “The Darby Hub ranks first among the three hubs because it is located in the Agricultural Reserve, has numerous large parcels available with prime soils, could be implemented relatively quickly and conforms to zoning and the park master plan. The Owens Park Activity Building, recently closed for budget reasons, could be used as an interim location for the administrative offices while work on the Darby House and Store are completed” (MC-MNCPPC memo, p. 7).

## **2. Initiative II. Montgomery County Sustainable Farm Viability Enhancement Initiative (SFVEI)**

[INT 1, p. 62, INT 3, p. 66, INT 4, p. 69, INT 5, p. 71]

**Purpose:** To engage the whole sustainable farming community in Montgomery County by establishing a **Montgomery County Sustainable Farms Network (SFN)** with programs that assist established farmers and farmers that leave the incubator who desire to continue improving their businesses in some way or receive support/assistance with issues that arise.

As Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Kathleen Merrigan recently posted on the USDA “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF2)” blog, “Secretary Vilsack and I are concerned about the ‘disappearing middle’ in American agriculture – those farmers and ranchers who find themselves squeezed between low prices for their products and high operating costs. Over the past decade Maryland, like many other states, has been losing many of these mid-sized family farms. According to the latest Census of Agriculture, between 2002 and 2007 alone, 155 [Maryland farmers](#) with gross sales between \$100,000 and \$500,000 disappeared.” In Montgomery County, the need for helping existing farmers sustainably produce and sell more food and become more profitable businesses is crucial to the long-term overall success of the Sustainable Community Food Initiative. Based at the Incubator site, the MC Sustainable Farm Network would connect organically principled farms in the County both within and outside of the incubator, strengthening the farming community, providing support and assistance, and continued education to farmers. Specifically, the Network would offer member farms the following programs:

a) **Business Development Program**

*Model programs:* Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program (VFVEP) [BP 3, p. 41], Intervale Center’s Success on Farms (SOF) program, [R1, p. 113]

*Proposed Program Overview:*

Many farmers realize that their businesses could be improved, but lack the business expertise to plan how best to increase their farm’s profitability or how to write a business plan. The DED’s Ag Services division works to assist MC farmers with this as much as possible given limited resources, but farmers could greatly benefit from a more comprehensive program. Based on the Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program (VFVEP)[BP 3], the Sustainable Farm Business Development Program would provide continuing business planning support and business consultation tailored to meet each farmer’s needs.

For select farmers going through some kind of transition or perhaps for farmers without a business plan that decide they want help developing one, the Program would also offer an **Intensive Business Planning Program** or a “business school for sustainable farmers.”

The VFVEP was created in 2003 as a public-private partnership funded with \$100,000 from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB). Since its inception, VFVEP has grown with increasing amounts of funding coming from outside sources. In 2010, 72% of the program’s \$809,000 budget came from private foundations and grants. The two-year business planning program has been used to help farmers from 230 Vermont farms develop business plans; 96% of the Program’s participants believe the program helps make their businesses more profitable.

Using VFVEP as a model, the MC SFVEI’s Intensive Business Planning Program would have a coordinator meet with the farmer to get a sense for his/her needs and then assemble a team of experts that would work with that farm. The consultants would work with the farmer to: 1. Collect farm data and improve record-keeping methods as needed in order to carry out an intensive evaluation of the farmer’s business. 2. Analyze the business’s strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement, and set goals for the business. And finally, 3. Prepare (or modify) a detailed written business plan.

One year after the completion of the business plan, Program staff would follow up with each farmer and collect more data to evaluate his/her progress and then help the farmer modify the business plan as needed. The majority of farmers in the VFEP see increases in their gross sales and net profits the next year. Financial and/or technical assistance in implementing the changes stated in the business plan that was developed could also be provided for select farmers.

Using the business plan they develop and their new business-oriented perspective that the Program promotes, farmers will be able to make sound decisions in order to continually improve their farm business and provide more organic food for the community.

*Potential Partners:* DED’s business resources, Ag Services, Small Business Development Center, MARBIDCO (<http://www.marbidco.org/home.html>), private consultants, UMD Extension, Montgomery College.

b) An **Agricultural Advocate** to help farmers deal with government regulations and licensing requirements. The Agricultural Advocate has been suggested by the

County's agricultural community for several years as a way to address the challenging regulatory requirements of the County Government overall. One of the primary reasons farmers in Montgomery County choose not to pursue and maintain Organic Certification is the cost and difficulty of the certification process, which costs hundreds of dollars and takes about three years to complete [INT 1, 5]. The Ag Advocate could serve as a liaison between the MD Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) and farmers to make the process less intimidating, time-consuming, and expensive for farmers. Obtaining a license for food processing, which would enable farmers to sell "value-added" foods like jams and sauces (which can help to improve profitability for farmers and supplement their produce) is a similarly daunting task [INT 3]. The Network would address these issues by providing an agricultural advocate (or "red tape cutter") who would work closely with the Department of Permitting Services, as well as the DED, MDA, and, of course, farmers to:

- Help farmers accomplish their specific business goals by guiding them through the licensing process and directing them to necessary paper-work, thereby saving farmers valuable time and resources. In particular, farmers could receive assistance in pursuing Organic certification and a food processing and sales permit.
- Keep farmers well informed of grant opportunities, upcoming deadlines for programs and licensing/regulatory requirements, etc., using a website and personal contacts.

c) **Technical and Legal Assistance** to help farmers implement changes that were identified either through the Business Development Program or by the farmer independently, and deal with issues that arise. The SFN could work with DED's Ag Services' existing resources, Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD), and UMD Extension to provide a more effective technical assistance program that addresses individual farmers' plans and needs [INT 3, INT 5].

d) A **Sustainable Farm Workforce Coordinator (SFWC)** who would receive requests from farms for labor and coordinate the recruitment and transportation of volunteers, interns/apprentices, and day laborers to Network farms. Currently, workers at day labor sites aren't getting enough jobs and County farms could benefit from having more hands in the field [INT 4, INT 5]. The Food Innovation Center's Processing Center [II.B.2, p. 21] would benefit from coordinated gleaning efforts. The SFWC could work with MCPS, the WWOOF website, and CASA de Maryland to identify workers and publicize volunteer opportunities. To make transportation efficient (and more convenient for farmers), a driver could pick-up workers at day

labor sites designated for agricultural workers and drive to the Reserve, dropping off workers at their designated farms along the way. A school bus or similar vehicle could be used.

*Funding opportunity: National Farmworker Jobs Program*

<http://www.doleta.gov/MSFW/html/NFJP.cfm>

**Additional Membership benefits** could include: Year-round access to educational opportunities such as seminars and workshops on a wide range of topics featuring experts from the agricultural and business communities that would be held throughout the year, opportunities to share ideas and collaborate with other farmers on joint-farm projects, access to the MC Healthy Food Hub (*III.B.1, p. 25*), permission to display a standard “Montgomery County Sustainable Farm Network” member label at farmers markets and farm stands, on the farm’s website, and as a sticker/label on all products or packages from that farm, and free compost to apply to soil through Growing SOUL [*INT 25, p. 106*].

*Member Requirements:* Member farms would have to be primarily table food growers that follow organic production principles. Farms should also agree to have composting bins on-site. In addition, the farm should agree to contribute resources to helping other members of the network. Farms could also be required pay an annual membership fee to help cover the administrative costs of providing the network. Fee amount could be a sliding scale varying based on farms’ net sales.

### **3. Initiative III. Sustainable Agriculture Workforce Development and Public Education: Montgomery County Organic Farm School**

**Purpose:** To develop the organic agricultural workforce in Montgomery County by educating and training aspiring and beginning farmers to run a successful organic farm business in Montgomery County. A primary objective of this program is to funnel graduates into the sustainable farm incubator.

*Model Programs:* ALBA’s Beginning Farmer Education Program [*BP 2, p. 39*], Michigan State University’s Student Organic Farm [*BP 4, p. 44*], Stone Barns Center [*BP 5, p. 45*], [*R1, p. 113*].

#### *Proposed Program Overview*

The County has a huge and growing immigrant population, and many of these immigrants come from rural areas of Central America and Mexico where they worked in agriculture. Moreover, many of these people come from places where the type of farming being practiced uses fewer chemicals than the industrial farming in

America. The traditions of these cultures are more similar to organic farming. In addition, Woody Woodruff of Red Wiggler Farm has suggested that many recent college grads would like go into organic farming. While the incubator mainly provides the land and *physical* capital that farmers need to successfully launch and grow their businesses, the MC Organic Farm School will improve the County's agricultural *human* capital.

The Organic Farm School would offer two intensive training courses:

1. The first course would be for people who already have experience in agriculture but could benefit from learning *organic* farming methods, learning about the *business planning and marketing* side of farming, and leadership development. This program would be based on ALBA's Beginning Farmer Education Program [BP 2] and would aim to prepare students for a career in commercial organic farming. Although it would be open to anyone with a solid agricultural background, this course could be targeted towards Latino immigrants who want to start farms in Montgomery County, possibly in the incubator. The course should be bilingual.
2. The second course would be longer and more comprehensive, starting with the basic principles of organic agriculture and covering all aspects of running an organic farm business throughout the entire growing season, from planting and harvesting to making business decisions to marketing. During the course, students would receive a mix of classroom instruction and hands-on learning through working on the community farm and working on marketing, and managing the business end/sales.

The School could also offer full-time apprenticeships (paid, if possible) for graduates and other landless farmers who want to gain more experience running an organic farm. As Stone Barn Center does, the Organic Farm School could offer summer camps and after-school programs for kids of all ages to learn hands-on about farming and the foods they eat.

The Organic Farm School could consist of a classroom for lessons during the off-season and a training farm for hands-on learning with all the features of a modern USDA certified organic farm and a diversity of crops and possibly some livestock and chickens. In addition, some classes covering greenhouses and hydroponics could be taught off-site at the Urban Ag Center [IV.B.3, p. 32]. Students could sell the goods produced from the training farm through an on-farm market and a CSA to encourage the public to visit the Farm School. This would generate revenue for the School while training students in marketing. Ideally, the School would be co-located with the Sustainable Farm Incubator to allow for students to



develop “mentor” relationships with existing farmers throughout the course, and sharing of resources and equipment between the incubator and the School. Towards the end of both of the training courses, interested students should be directed to resources for applying for the incubator and would work on developing the business plan and crop plan that will be finalized when they launch as incubator farms the next spring.

To increase County residents’ awareness and understanding of sustainable food production, year-round tours of the farm and gardening clinics and mini-courses could also be offered.

*Partners:* The program coordinator could work with DED’s business planning programs and Division of Workforce of Services (DWS) for business support. Partner with UMD Extension and established County farmers such as Woody Woodruff of Red Wiggler Farm could assist with organic farming lessons.

### **C. Legislative Recommendations:**

1. **Long Term Leases:** One of the greatest challenges that table food growers in Montgomery County face is the uncertainty associated with the short-term leases that Park & Planning primarily provides. To address this and increase the supply of locally produced table food, the County should provide more *long-term* leases at low rates to *table food farmers*. Priority should be given to *organic* farmers. In addition, incentives should be implemented to make it more profitable for landowners to lease and sell land to organic farmers [INT 7, p. 76, INT 3, p. 66, INT 8, p. 79].
2. **Zoning Policy:** As the GETF land use committee recommended the zoning code should be amended to allow for “the growth of the local agricultural industry, by allowing structures like abattoirs... greenhouses, agricultural and milk processing facilities, grain elevators for non-feed grain, and composting facilities” (GETF, p.19)
3. **Ease on-farm processing restrictions** to allow farmers to make and sell value-added products at their farm [INT 3, p. 66, INT 15, p. 88].

## **II. The Montgomery County Food Innovation Center (FIC)**

[Increasing Supply of Healthy Locally Processed Foods]

**A. Mission:** The mission of the Food Innovation Center (FIC) is to increase the supply and consumption of healthy and organic locally processed foods while helping small businesses prosper, developing the County’s culinary workforce, and generating demand for local farm goods (produce, poultry, and meat).

The FIC could include the following Initiatives to achieve its mission:

**B. MC Food Innovation Center Initiatives:**

- 1. MC Kitchen Incubator**
- 2. MC Healthy Food Processing Center**
- 3. MC Healthy Catering Company**

**1. Initiative I. Kitchen Incubator Program**

**Purpose:** To provide a shared-use commercial kitchen and technical assistance for food entrepreneurs who desire to launch or grow their culinary businesses.

*Model Programs:* La Cocina [BP 7, p. 47], Rutgers Food Innovation Center [BP 8, p. 50], [R2, p.114].

*Proposed Program Overview*

In Montgomery County, there are many culinary entrepreneurs who have developed great recipes and business plans but lack access to an affordable commercial kitchen space necessary for legally producing and selling their goods and need assistance with legal and technical issues such as obtaining licenses and dealing with regulations. Creating a kitchen incubator program would greatly benefit Montgomery County by:

- Increasing the diversity/scope of delicious and healthy foods available to consumers that small businesses offer.
- Stimulating economic growth by empowering low-resource entrepreneurs, resulting in a multiplier effect on the local economy.

Based on La Cocina, the incubator would create a flourishing community of hardworking, creative, cooperative businesswomen/men who produce healthy food for County residents. La Cocina is a nonprofit kitchen incubator program in San Francisco, CA that assists low-income food entrepreneurs, primarily Latino women, in growing their businesses. La Cocina provides highly motivated and skilled selected applicants with affordable kitchen space, one-on-one technical assistance, group workshops, connections to outside resources/assistance and markets. In 2008, their program resulted in the creation and retention of 45 formal jobs and an estimated \$700,000 (a 20% growth from 2007) in total sales for La Cocina businesses.

Participants in the MC Kitchen Incubator would rent space in the fully equipped commercial kitchen at a rate determined on a sliding scale that would be determined by the user's income level and the time of day. Hourly rates for different times would be based on demand. To foster a sense of community among these independent businesses, mandatory monthly meetings could be held which would

bring all the participants together to update the staff and the other users on their business's progress, bring up issues and concerns, and share ideas and provide opportunities for business collaboration. Workshops covering a broad range of different aspects of the food business could be offered. Staff should place emphasis on healthy cooking and using local ingredients. Occasional "field trips" to County farms and farm markets could be organized. One-on-one technical assistance will be provided by trained staff as needed for participants to deal with specific issues. Staff will use a broad network of consultants and resources outside the incubator to assist with each unique business with their specific issues.

*Partners/Resources:* The same business resources provided for the Organic Farm School (I.3, p.16) and the Agricultural Business Development Program (I.2.a), p.13) could be used to assist participants in the kitchen incubator program who need assistance developing and improving their business plans. Kitchen staff, the Executive Chef of the FIC's catering business, and guest chefs from the restaurant community could provide cooking-related workshops. The Food Hub (III. B.1, p. 25) could assist staff in providing marketing assistance for individual incubator business, and connect them with retailers and other large purchasers.

*Commercial Users:* To provide additional revenue that would subsidize the Incubator program, the FIC could also rent kitchen space to commercial users who would pay full market rates. To avoid scheduling conflicts, the incubator staff will ask each incubator business to create a schedule of the times they will be using the kitchen on a weekly business in advance.

*Branding:* To help increase the sales of the incubator businesses and publicize the program, all incubator businesses will display a Montgomery County Food Innovation Center (Kitchen Incubator) seal/label on their products. Eventually, consumers will see the FIC Incubator sticker on a product and buy it knowing that the FIC businesses produce only the highest quality foods.

*Royalty:* As businesses grow above a certain threshold of sales or net sales, they would pay a small percentage of their net sales back to the Incubator program. The royalty could be "progressive" so the percentage paid would be greater for very successful businesses. Paying this royalty could be required even after businesses exit the incubator so businesses give back to the program that enabled their success and in doing so, promote the success of the next incubator businesses [INT 15, p. 88].

*Markets for selling goods:* A Food Innovation Center on-site store, farmers markets, the Organic Farm School on-farm store and other farm stores, mobile vendors/mobile markets, retailers such as Whole Foods [INT 23, p. 101], and organic

markets in Poolesville [INT 9, p. 80]. Wheaton could also serve as a retail outlet [INT 15]. The Healthy Catering business [II.B.3, p. 23] could also buy products from incubator businesses.

## **2. Initiative II. MC Healthy Food Processing Center**

**Purpose:** To increase the supply of healthy processed foods/value-added products.

*Model Programs/Facilities:* Rutgers Food Innovation Center's Shared-Use Processing Area [BP 8, p. 50].

### *Proposed Program Overview*

1. *Healthy Core Products:* The Center would offer buyers (households, the Community Food Education Program [IV.B.1, p. 30], Kitchen Incubator businesses, the Healthy Catering line, restaurants, other commercial kitchens, etc.) all-natural and organic stocks and sauces. These would be intended for buyers who want to use these core products cook natural, healthier, better-tasting, "real" food but do not have all day to do so. To make stock, it typically takes about six hours. Alexander Stuart has already developed a business plan for such a program, which he calls "Take Stock" [INT 18, p. 94]. All-natural and organic stocks are largely unavailable in the marketplace today. *Chesapeake Gardens* is one company that offers "real" all-natural core foods, but they produce mainly broths instead of stocks. The MC Food Processing Center's product would also distinguish itself by buying inputs locally from County farms. Bones that may otherwise be thrown away could be picked up from local meat slaughtering facilities and used. This operation would reduce food waste by using unused bones and buying farmers' "seconds" and "thirds" that would otherwise go bad and be thrown away, and it would also provide more healthy food options for restaurants/food businesses and households. The Center could even "rescue" food from Manna. "Take Stock" could also be a profitable enterprise that could be used to write off the costs of some of the other programs.

The Food Processing Center could also produce it's own line of healthy, fully-cooked, vacuum-sealed products such as soups, without the sodium, MSG, and other additives found in the products that dominate the current marketplace.

2. *Organic and Natural "Heat and Eat" Meals:* Using the core products described above, the kitchen could also offer a line of fully cooked meals that would allow people who lack the time or skill to cook to eat delicious healthy, local, and organic food. When I interviewed someone who is currently on food stamps and asked what food-related good or service could most benefit low-income people, he responded, "healthy ready-to-eat meals are what's missing. Poor people don't have time to

cook.” By having the Food Innovation Center provide this service, people, poor and rich, can enjoy healthy all-natural soups and an extensive line of other products made from local ingredients quickly and conveniently by simply removing the meal from a vacuum-sealed pouch—not a can, as canning requires the use of harmful chemicals—and heating it. These meals could be sold at retail stores, the FIC store and Sustainable Farm Center Store, and through a CSA-style subscription plan.

*3. Value-added products:* The Center could also provide County farmers and cooks access to the processing equipment necessary for them to make and sell value-added products such as jams and sauces. Currently, due to restrictions on on-farm processing in MC, it is a difficult process for farmers to get licensed to sell such products, which, as the name implies, make farming a much more profitable business and promote agricultural development. Demand for a processing facility is high among County farmers [INT 3, p. 66, INT 4, p. 69]. The processing facilities at the FIC would allow farmers to rent space to process their food and put it in jars. Farmers could also pay to have their produce vacuum-sealed and then transported to the Food Hub, where it could be stored and then sold year-round [III.B.1]. This would make healthy local produce available to County residents even during the winter months, and would also enhance farm profitability. Since not all farmers will want to spend time and money to use the facilities, the FIC’s Processing Center could also produce it’s own line of jams and sauces using farmers’ “seconds” under the Food Innovation Center umbrella brand label.

### **3. Initiative III. MC Healthy Catering Company**

*Model Programs:* Fresh Start Catering of DC Central Kitchen

([www.freshstartcatering.com/](http://www.freshstartcatering.com/)) [INT 17, p. 92], and Through the Kitchen Door’s Catering enterprise (<http://www.kitchendoor.org/catering.shtml>) [INT 15, p. 88].

*Proposed Program overview:* Establish a healthy food catering business that uses local ingredients to serve arrangements of high-quality dishes to businesses, schools, government offices, nonprofits, and private parties/events. In addition, fresh, ready-to-eat meals could be delivered to Senior Centers and institutions, as Meals on Wheels does in limited areas of Maryland. This product could become a popular element of future efforts to encourage aging in place.

A Purchasing Coordinator would buy produce and meat primarily from MC Sustainable Farms (perhaps via the Food Hub), stocks and sauces from the MC Healthy Food Processing Center, and some already-cooked dishes from the kitchen

incubator businesses. An Executive Chef would create healthy balanced menus and manage the kitchen.

Some of the catering company's employees would be graduates of Through the Kitchen Door's training program. Job applicants without cooking experience could be referred to Through the Kitchen Door (TTKD) for culinary training. Another option would be for the FIC to offer its own workforce development program based on the TTKD curriculum. Trainees could gain experience specifically with the FIC catering company's kitchen and business through time as an intern/apprentice cook during the end of the course. The catering business would serve as a hands-on learning environment for the MC Culinary Workforce Development Program. Entrepreneurial cooks who work at the catering company could apply to start businesses in the incubator program, having gained a solid background in healthy cooking through their experience with the catering business.

**Food Innovation Center Facilities:** Two commercial kitchens, including an area for food-processing equipment [INT 18, p. 94], would be ideal: one kitchen would be used for the Incubator program and one for the Catering company. Ideally, these two kitchens would be adjacent to each other. There could be facilities located both upcounty and downcounty.

### **III. Montgomery County Food Marketing and Distribution Innovation Programs**

[Linking Producers to New and Existing Markets, Linking Buyers to Local Farms and Food Businesses]

#### **A. Background**

**Mission:** To increase the sales of MC sustainable farms and value-added producers and reduce transaction costs while making healthy local food more available to County residents.

#### **B. Initiatives: I. Montgomery County Healthy Food Hub**

##### **II. Montgomery County Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Network**

#### **1. Initiative I. Montgomery County Healthy Food Hub**

**Purpose:** To serve as an intermediary between producer and consumer, connecting producers with new retail outlets, reducing transaction costs, providing season-

extending storage space for producers, reducing food waste, and facilitating the distribution of food “from farm to hub to plate”.

*Model Programs: La Montanita [BP 9, p. 52], ALBA Organics [BP 2, p. 39], [R3, p. 114 ] Proposed Program Overview*

For farmers, “the best opportunity to expand is a local market...It’s enhanced if they can be joined together with other local producers so sufficient quality and quantity can be established for schools, hospitals, jails and other purchasers,” said US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack in a 2009 *Washington Post* article [R3, p. 114]. This is what programs like the La Montanita Food Cooperative have accomplished. La Montanita’s Co-op Trade’s “food shed” initiative helps ensure the survival of mid-sized farms in New Mexico while providing healthy local food for tens of thousands of customers by providing pick-up, supply and storage services for 400 local producers and distribution of regional products to La Montanita’s four co-op stores and other retail outlets. In 2009, La Montanita sold \$27,563,048 worth of food to 14,000 co-op members as well as thousands of non-members. By selling a mix of local and non-local foods at their stores, La Montanita has been able to give New Mexico farmers a good price for their products while also remaining a profitable entity.

Based on La Montanita and other similar programs [R3, p. 114], the MC Food Hub would aggregate goods from many local farms and processors and distribute products to buyers under the Food Hub umbrella. A Food Hub staff person would serve as a “local foods broker” by facilitating transactions between buyers and producers, while ensuring a fair price for both parties. Retail stores like Whole Foods would support the Food Hub, which would serve as a “one stop shop” for local food, making it significantly easier for them to buy locally. At the same time, the Hub would be extremely valuable for producers, as they would collectively only have to pay for one insurance plan and one delivery, instead of one for *each* producer, drastically reducing overhead costs. The primary concern among farmers with such an initiative would be loss of individual farm identity, which is essential to their businesses. To address this, individual producers could package and label their own goods. Moreover, retail stores could provide labeled signs, as Whole Foods does, so that the consumer knows not only that the product came from the Montgomery County Sustainable Healthy Food Hub, but also which specific farm the product came from [INT 23, p. 102].

The Hub would require a central warehouse with dry, refrigerated, and freezer storage, and refrigerated trucks that circulate the County picking up food

from farms and dropping them off at retail stores, restaurants, institutions, the Food Innovation Center for processing, the Food Hub Warehouse for storage, as well as other sites. The Hub would also distribute food from the Food Innovation Center. Ideally, the Food Hub's permanent facilities would be located at the same site as the FIC's processing facilities. The Food Hub could provide local produce for **Manna** [INT 24, p. 103]. To help cover overhead costs, the Hub could also buy goods in bulk from established "mission-based" food businesses outside the FIC such as **Honest Tea** and Stonyfield Farms for retail sale. Food Hub products could be sold from *MC Sustainable Community Food Stores*. The first store could be established on-site at the Food Hub Warehouse.

The Food Hub could also provide a multi-farm CSA option that provides weekly shares, like any other CSA, except the food that buyers get in any given box could come from several different farms, instead of just from one farm. The Intervale Food Hub has done this successfully. The CSA shares could also include prepared foods from the Food Innovation Center businesses.

As La Montanita does, the Hub could also make bulk purchases of farm supplies and inputs including ingredients for value-added products (such as organic sugar) and distribute these products to farms (and to the Food Innovation Center) in the same trucks and on the same routes used to pick up farm products in order to minimize miles travelled and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Currently, most of farmers' "seconds" is not used for food. Some County farms throw away **50%** of their total crop yields because it falls under the "seconds" category. Greg Glenn of Rocklands Farm [INT 4, p. 69] estimates that 75% of the "seconds" and "thirds" that farmers usually throw away is of good enough quality to use for food. The Food Hub could collect this food from the farmer and deliver it to the Food Innovation Center [II, p. 19] where it can be processed and turned into healthy delicious meals that the Hub could then distribute [INT 17, p. 92].

The Food Hub will have incentive to help farmers increase their production capacity to meet wholesale demand and obtain Organic Certification. Therefore, it would be appropriate for the Hub to work with the Sustainable Farm Viability Enhancement program to help that program achieve its mission. The Food Hub Producer Coordinator could also hold preseason planning meetings, as the Appalachian Harvest Food Hub (<http://www.asdevelop.org/>) does, with Network farmers to determine what to grow, how much to grow, when and who will grow what in order to meet wholesale demand.



## **2. Initiative II. Montgomery County Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Network**

**Purpose:** To engage the community and mobilize support for local, healthy, sustainably produced food. The program aims to unite local farms and County residents by helping work offices, neighborhoods, and other groups in the community form and sustain CSA buying groups, thereby increasing communities' access to local fresh healthy food while supporting sustainable agriculture in Montgomery County.

As the GETF Report states, for farms to “be as successful as possible, the County will need to be proactive in connecting this existing demand with...new supply” (GETF, p. 24). Whereas the Food Hub seeks to link farmers with big purchasers and consumers, generating wholesale demand for their products, the MC **CSA Network** would work from the grassroots level, mobilizing communities to form “healthy food buying groups,” or CSA groups that receive weekly food shares in boxes throughout the growing season at a designated pick-up location within the community. This program would connect communities with local farmers so even if you live in urban parts of the County, you can still “know your farmer.”

*Model Programs:* Just Food’s CSA in NYC [BP 10, p. 55]

*Proposed Program Overview:*

Just Food’s CSA in NYC program helps urban residents form and manage CSAs and matches them with regional farmers who then deliver the CSA food from the farm to a distribution location in the city where CSA members pick up their shares. Just Food serves as an “incubator” for CSAs, “training community organizations or volunteers to start and run CSAs, with the goal that they will operate independently after one year” [BP 10, p. 55].

With the MC CSA Network, members of an office, neighborhood, church, or other groups that want to form a CSA would contact Network staff. The MC CSA Network staff would then assist the individual in recruiting other community members and starting up a CSA group, training volunteers or members of a community organization such as **IMPACT Silver Spring** [INT 22, p. 101] to successfully manage a CSA and connect them to a farm or several farms. The goal would be that after the first year the CSA group would be self-sustaining.

The program would connect CSA leaders with the Food Hub’s delivery coordinator to have CSA shares delivered to pick-up sites. It would also help CSA

groups implement food stamps and subsidized payment programs for low-income people.

The CSA Network could offer monthly workshops on topics related to sustaining or growing a CSA group and be available to support the CSAs on specific issues. Local chefs from restaurants and from the Food Innovation Center could give cooking demos at the CSA site, showing members how they can make healthy delicious meals using the ingredients in their CSA shares. It could also refer CSA members to the Food Education Program so that members themselves will be able to cook. The program could provide community groups with nutritional and health information.

The MC CSA Network could hold an annual conference that brings all the CSA groups in the County or region together, along with farmers and other key figures in the “food movement” to discuss CSA-related issues as well as broader topics related to the community food system in general.

### **3. Initiative III. Montgomery County Sustainable Farmers Markets**

*[INT 8, p. 79, INT 9, p. 80, INT 15, p. 88]*

*Proposed Program Overview:* Create farmers markets, roadside farm stands, and “mobile micro markets”, like the Green Carts found in NYC ([http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cdp/cdp\\_pan\\_green\\_carts.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cdp/cdp_pan_green_carts.shtml)) throughout Montgomery County. The program would also work with existing farmers markets to implement programs to accept food stamps, as Crossroads Market does through its “Fresh Checks” program (<http://thecrossroadsfarmersmarket.org/>). “This will involve the acquisition of Wireless Credit Debit POS authorization devices that farmers purchase and cost share with the DED. In 2008, the DED-Agricultural Services Division helped 7 farmers to purchase these devices, which increase farmers market sales as more people are carrying less cash,” notes Jeremy Criss, Manager of the DED Agricultural Services Division.

## **IV. Montgomery County Food Education Initiative**

*[Transforming Eating Habits and Increasing Demand for Local and Organic Food]*

### **A. Background**

**Mission:** To reduce obesity and related health problems, and increase demand for local organic foods by developing lifelong healthy eating habits through education and outreach.

Poor eating habits have greatly contributed to the rise of obesity as a public health crisis. While obesity, diabetes, and related diseases afflict County residents of all racial and socio-economic groups, these problems are most prevalent among African-American, Latino, and low-income residents. In addition to the need for supplying more healthy food (as the first three sets of initiatives aim to do), education will need to be a key component of any initiative to address these issues.

Although demand for local food currently exceeds supply, as the agricultural development initiatives and the Food Innovation Center boost the capacity of local food producers, the next step will be mobilizing the community behind the Buy Montgomery and Eat Healthy/Fresh movement and generating broad and lasting consumer demand for these local goods. To stimulate demand for local and organic food, the MC Sustainable Food Initiative should educate the public through hands-on learning activities such as gardening, cooking, and tastings, and disseminate information to the public about the value (health, environmental, economic) of eating healthy, local and organic food. As Gordon Clark of Montgomery Victory Gardens [INT 7, p. 76] explained, the number one way to get people to buy local is by getting them to grow their own food. Kids who are involved with growing and cooking a variety of foods are more likely to eat and enjoy new and diverse foods. In addition, a marketing campaign that promotes buying from MC Sustainable Farm Network and Incubator growers, as well as from MC Food Innovation Center businesses should be implemented, making use of a recognizable seal/label that is displayed on these products.

**B.** To accomplish this, the following Initiatives should be implemented:

- 1. Initiative I. Montgomery County Community Food Education Program**
- 2. Initiative II. Montgomery County School Food Education Program**
- 3. Initiative III. Montgomery County Community Gardens Initiative**
- 4. Initiative IV. Montgomery County Healthy Eating Marketing Initiative**

### **1. Initiative I. Montgomery County Community Food Education Program**

**Purpose:** To educate and empower people (especially low-income) by teaching them to cook healthy food using affordable ingredients while building communities by forming relationships among the participants. Through hands-on learning, the Food Education Program aims to transform the eating habits of MC residents and stimulate demand for local healthy foods [INT 15, p. 88].

*Model Programs:* Through the Kitchen Door (TTKD) (<http://www.kitchendoor.org/>)

*Proposed Program Overview*

The MC Community Food Education Program would travel to different communities (instead of making community-members travel to a central location) to train people in healthy cooking. The curriculum for the courses could be based on TTKD and should be bilingual (and the program could potentially be managed by TTKD as well). Given the ethnic diversity of the County, an effort should be made to teach people how to prepare traditional ethnic meals in the healthiest way possible, using local ingredients. Ingredients used for the classes would be provided by County farms and the Food Innovation Center, and would be delivered by the Healthy Food Hub. Existing underutilized kitchens in churches and other community centers could be used. These kitchens wouldn't have to be commercially licensed since they would just be used for training, not processing. The Program could work with UMD Extension's federally funded food and nutrition education programs, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program(FSNEP).

## **2. Initiative II. Montgomery County Schools Food Education Program**

**Purpose:** To end childhood obesity in Montgomery County and enhance students' academic performance by promoting life-long healthy eating habits, while simultaneously educating students about food from an interdisciplinary perspective.

*Model Programs:* Baltimore City School System's healthy food initiatives led by Anthony Geraci [BP 12, p. 60], Alexandria City Schools, Green Mountain Farm to School [BP 11, p. 57], Hampstead Hill's "Food for Life" program.

Upon entering as Baltimore City Schools' Director of Food and Nutrition Services [BP 12], Tony Geraci has reformed school meals and food education, starting with **buying local**, writing the first request for proposal in Maryland history that called for only Maryland-grown produce to be purchased by the school district. "Geraci dropped long-standing purchasing contracts for U.S. Department of Agriculture commodities, such as canned peaches drowned in syrup, and started buying fresh fruits and vegetables -- 430,000 pounds last year, all Maryland grown" (<http://www.edutopia.org/green-schools-food-service-environment>). By March 2010, the department had spent \$1.3 million on local produce in the 2009-2010 academic year. Great Kids Farm was a natural extension of Geraci's desire to improve students' eating habits by upgrading the quality and nutritional value of school food, as well as educating kids about food-related topics. The national Farm to School network estimates there are about 2,000 programs around the country bringing healthy food from local farms to school meals (<http://www.farmtoschool.org/>). Montgomery County schools should follow suit.

*Proposed Programs Overview [INT 30, p. 112]*

1. Emphasize healthy eating and include the benefits (taste, health, environmental) of eating local and organic in the school curriculum. Encourage kids to taste new foods.
2. Schools should buy more local and organic food from County farms and from the Food Innovation Center (via the Food Hub) for use in school meals [INT 19, p. 96, INT 3, p. 66].
3. Lift ban on school gardens to teach kids about gardening and where their food comes from while producing food for cooking classes, school meals, and Manna. School gardens and efforts to put more fresh, local, in-season produce on kids' plates which would help them develop healthy eating habits by teaching them that fresh healthy food tastes better too. Moreover, involving kids in the process of producing food through gardening and cooking will make them want to eat these foods more. The initiative could also offer after-school gardening programs [BP 11, p. 57] and field trips to the Food Innovation Center, the Organic Farm School, and the rest of the Reserve's sustainable farms.
4. Publicize opportunities for students to get internships, volunteer and earn SSL hours through MC Sustainable Food Initiative programs.

### **3. Initiative III. Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Initiative**

**Purpose:** In addition to producing more local food, this program aims to increase demand for local produce by engaging people in the food growing process. (See also I. 3. Organic Farm School, p. 16)

*Model Programs:* Growing Power ([www.growingpower.org/](http://www.growingpower.org/)), [R1, p. 113]

*Proposed Program Overview:*

This Initiative would educate the public about gardening and food, and create more community gardens by partnering with Montgomery Victory Gardens [INT 7, p. 76]. It would look to utilize suburban County office grounds (as the Montgomery County Planning Department has recently done at its building) in addition to religious buildings, prisons, and other institutions.

The program could also create a *Sustainable Community Agriculture Center* at a site outside the Reserve with greenhouses and hydroponics for highly productive year-round growing [INT 13, p. 86, INT 3, p. 66]. The Organic Farm School could work with UMD Extension to train farmers to use these technologies, and offer a extension program that would teach community members. Farmers in the Reserve could also rent space in these facilities for commercial use, especially during the winter months.

#### **4. Initiative IV. MC Healthy Eating Marketing Initiative** [INT 22, p. 101]

**Purpose:** To disseminate information to the public about food programs and about the benefits of eating local, organic, and healthy so that Montgomery County consumers can make educated decisions about the food they choose to eat and are aware of the opportunities available through the Sustainable Community Food System Initiative.

*Proposed Program Overview*

Work with Chamber of Commerce to encourage buying from local sustainable producers through branding: *“Member of the Montgomery County Sustainable Farmer Network: This food was produced locally, following Organic principles”*. Currently, there is a “Pride of Montgomery” sign available through DED’s Ag Services divisions that local growers can present at farm stands but new seals should be designed and displayed on products/packages of Sustainable Farm Network members and the Food Innovation Center. An additional seal could be added for products distributed via the Food Hub. Also offer a label for food processors outside the FIC that buy a certain percentage of their inputs from MC producers to provide an incentive for businesses to buy local.

A full-fledged “guerilla marketing” campaign should accompany these labeling initiatives. The initiative would use the resources of the County’s Public

Information Office, Office of Community Partnerships, and MCPS to promote Buying Montgomery and Eating Fresh to all groups in the community, publicize the **Sustainable Community Food Initiative's** available programs, and to discuss food-related issues. The initiative would use non-County media outlets as well, such as local newspaper ads for the Community Food Education Program. The County should deliver public service announcements about the value of changing our eating habits and supporting the Initiative, implementing a Sustainable Community Food System in Montgomery County.

### **Part Three. Next Steps**

**I. Business Plan:** Create public-private partnerships to manage the Initiative's programs.

**II. Budget:** Determine the estimated costs of each program.

**III. Funding:** Apply for grants through public and private organizations such as USDA and Kellogg, as well as other sources.

### **Part Four: Appendices**

#### **Appendix I. Contacts: List of People Interviewed:**

1. **Woody Woodruff**, Red Wiggler Farm
2. **Caroline Taylor**, Montgomery Countryside Alliance
3. **Jeremy Criss**, Ag Services Manager, Department of Economic Development (DED)
4. **Greg Glenn**, Rocklands Farms
5. **Anthony (Tony) Cohen and Steve Gillick**, Button Farm
6. **DED Meeting:** Jeremy Criss, John Korpela (Montgomery County Business Innovation Network), Tina Benjamin
7. **Gordon Clark**, Montgomery Victory Gardens
8. **Mitch Berliner**, Bethesda Central Farm Market
9. **Tim Whitehouse**, Poolesville Farmers Market
10. **Joyce Breiner Yaney**, Poolesville Green
11. **Ruppert Companies/Our House Meeting:** **Donna Nichols** (Ruppert), **Edwin Gould and Richard Bienvenue** (Our House)
12. **DEP Meeting:** **Dick Wegman** (Green Economy Task Force) and **Doug Weisburger** and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
13. **Peter James**
14. **Stephanie Oberle**, Brookside Gardens
15. **Dan Nachtigal**, Through the Kitchen Door
16. **Sheila Crye**, Young Chefs, Inc.
17. **Robert Egger**, DC Central Kitchen
18. **Alexander Stuart**, Take Stock
19. **Marla Caplon**, Food and Nutrition Services, MCPS
20. **Catherine Matthews**, Upcounty Regional Service Center
21. **Esther Bowring**, Montgomery County Public Information Office

- 22. **Alix Nunan**, IMPACT Silver Spring
- 23. **Mark “Coach” Smallwood**, Whole Foods
- 24. **Kim Damion**, Manna Food Center
- 25. **Jessica Weiss**, Growing SOUL
- 26. **Rana Koll-Mandel**, Bethesda Green
- 27. **Cheryl Kollin**, MBA, Sustainability
- 28. **Kelly Carneal**, 1000 Friends of Maryland
- 29. **Thomas Harr**, Family Services Institute
- 30. **Michelle McParland**, Registered Dietician, Ph.D.

## **Appendix II. Best Practices [BP 1-12]:**

### **[BP 1]**

#### **[Agricultural Development<Farm Incubator<Intervale Farms Program]**

1. Best practice in: Farm Incubator

2. Name of organization and website: Intervale Farms Program (FP),

[http://www.intervale.org/programs/agricultural\\_development/intervale\\_farms.shtml](http://www.intervale.org/programs/agricultural_development/intervale_farms.shtml)

3. Location: Burlington, VT

Site: The Intervale is a 700-acre floodplain in Burlington, VT that has a long history being used for agriculture, since as early as 3500 BC. The Intervale Center now manages 350 acres of that land, and the Farms Program covers about 120 acres within the Center.

4. Ownership and Operation: The Intervale Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that manages the Farms Program.

5. Stated Mission: “To incubate and grow viable, independent farm businesses and serve as a model beginner agriculture development program.”

The broader mission of the Intervale Center is to strengthen community food systems.

6. Program overview/summary: Intervale’s Farms Program (FP) oversees 12-13 independent for-profit organic farms at a time, covering up to 120 acres and annually producing between 600,000 and 1,000,000 lbs. of food. This accounts for an incredible 7% of Burlington’s fresh food; Intervale’s goal is to increase this figure to 10%. Farmers accepted in the FP are guaranteed land in Intervale for up to five years. Farmers share equipment and greenhouse resources, which are managed by the Intervale Farms Equipment Company (IFEC). The Land Committee manages



land, leases, and infrastructure. Farmers do not live on site, but Burlington is only one mile from Intervale. A key feature of the FP is farmers' progression over time through three stages of the program [See 8. Key Features, below].

7. Key features, keys to success, important information:

-The Three Stages of the Farms Program:

*1. Incubator level:* new farmers are at this level for up to 3 years. Incubator farms pay reduced rates on land and equipment fees, as 20% of these costs are subsidized by Intervale Center. Each year, between one and three new farmers join as incubators.

Farmers must meet the following *prerequisites* in order to apply for the Farms Program as incubators:

- Sound Business Plan that demonstrates good market opportunity;
- Minimal one to three years farm experience and have never owned a farm; -
- Personal capacity to take risk: resources to cover living expense;
- Strong awareness of organic production criteria (Intervale FP Application Packet, p.6).

Applications are reviewed first by the staff, then by the Intervale farmers who give their input to the Land Committee, which makes the final decision and leases accepted farmers the land (Intervale FP Application p.7).

Elements of Incubator status:

- a. Intervale provides incubator farms with connections to other organizations and educational resources that help the new farmers with various aspects of managing a farm, and help prepare them to become successful owners of their own self-sustaining farms.
- b. Incubator farms are each paired with a mentor farm that is similar to the incubator. The mentor provides advice and support.
- c. Farmers are required to attend monthly farmer meetings (FP Application, p.23).
- d. Farmers are on a yearly lease (paying 80% of the market price) that may be renewed each year provided that the incubator farm complies with land use protocols (by following the organic standards set by Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF) organization), and other Intervale Center regulations. Incubator farmers also review their business operation with IC staff on a regular basis (Hubbard 2).
- e. Intervale farms may only keep their incubator status for up to three years.

*2. Enterprise Level* farmers have farmed on Intervale for three to five years.

Farmers are expected to have increased the degree of financial sustainability after being at the incubator level for three years. Thus, they can continue as Intervale farmers, receiving support from staff and other farmers, only as “Enterprise” farmers, by paying full lease price for land and shared equipment (FP Application p.5). Enterprise farmers also get the privilege of two-year leases on land. After five years with the FP, many farmers will choose to leave Intervale and buy or lease their own land elsewhere where they can farm independently.

For enterprise farmers who elect to leave Intervale, there are still resources available to help these farmers transition to their own farms outside the incubator. Intervale’s “Success on Farms” (SOF) program (see SOF section below for more detail) helps farmers make this transition by providing consulting services, business support, etc. Intervale also connects farmers with outside programs to help them secure land; “Landlink, a program at the University of Vermont Center for Sustainable Agriculture, run with help from the Vermont Land Trust, matches farmers with available land to purchase when they complete the program” (“Grounding Ourselves” 10).

Some enterprise farmers, however, will apply to stay with Intervale after five years and, if accepted, become “mentor” farms.

3. *Mentor Level* farms have been at Intervale for five or more years.

Elements of Mentor status:

- a. Mentor farms remain on the Intervale land and continue paying the rates of enterprise level farmers for land, water, barn, water, cooler, loft, and land management (2010 FP Application, p.11).
- b. Mentor farms are paired with an incubator farm based on compatibility “to foster relationships and...provide technical assistance...on crop plans, crop rotations, marketing, cultivation practices, tractor operation, etc...” (IFP Application 5).
- c. In addition, “...Each mentor farm allocates 20 hours of their time each farm season to mentoring...and/or working on projects that help all Intervale farms (...[e.g.] clearing brush on the road or fixing equipment)” (IFP Application 5).

#### Marketing and Sales Strategies used by Intervale Farmers:

1. Direct to Consumer: CSAs and “face to face” (i.e. farmers market, farm retail) According to an Intervale survey, direct to consumer marketing accounts for 43% of all sales (Schattman and Cannella 3); and 56% of Intervale farmers cite this method as their primary outlet (8).

2. Wholesale distributors: sales to Food Hub and other wholesale distributors. 16% of Intervale farmers claimed that this was their main outlet (Schattman and Cannella 8).

3. “Wholesale Direct” (i.e. sales to restaurants, retailers, caterers, and institutions) was used as the primary approach by 28% of Intervale farmers surveyed (8).

#### Land Use Management and Sustainable Farming Practices:

All Intervale farms produce crops by following the organic standards set by the Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF) organization. In addition, IFP requires that all farms in the Intervale:

1. **Cover and rotate crops**—must lease sufficient land to practice crop rotation.
2. Apply **compost** to soil containing low organic matter, and test the nutrient level of soil each year before applying compost.
3. **Manage weeds** using organic principles--mulching, mowing, hoeing, cultivating and torching with flame weeder are acceptable, but chemical substances are not unless approved for organic use by VOF.
4. Use Integrated **Pest Management** (IPM) techniques to manage insects, cooperate with other farmers and with Intervale staff to control pests, and keep a log of all pest control on record.
5. Use Intervale resources as needed to ensure they are familiar with plant **diseases** and able to identify them when they appear. Intervale farmers must use the following organic methods to control diseases: crop rotation, VOF approved organic fungicides, diseased plant removal and disposal, tool sanitation, restriction of foot traffic, cleanliness, black plastic mulch use and/or drip irrigation or watering at ground level. Farmers must also keep records of any/all diseases.
6. Present a plan for **irrigation** to Intervale staff.
7. Submit annual **soil tests** (in addition to testing for organic matter content) during their three years as incubator farms.
8. Submit **end of year reports**.
9. Get Intervale’s approval before constructing any **buildings** or making **improvements** to the farm.

#### 8. Challenges, obstacles faced:

-Expanding production: “The four most common barriers were labor (43%), land (39%), marketing capacity (35%) and storage barriers (33%)”, according to Intervale’s 2008 “Farm Producer Survey: Preliminary Report” (9).

*[Note: The percentages add up to more than 100% because survey participants were asked to indicate the top three barriers to expanding production they face, from a list of nine potential issues.]*

#### 9. Plans for the future:

-looking to expand, accept 15 incubator farms at a time instead of 12-13.

#### 10. Resources used (in addition to the website):

1. Intervale Center Farms Program Application Packet. 2010.

2. "Paradise" by John Grogan, found on Intervalecompost.org.
3. Montgomery County Department of Parks. Memorandum "Re: Potential Agricultural Incubator on Parkland." May 27, 2010.
4. "Grounding Ourselves: Innovative Land Tenure Models in California and Beyond," A publication created by the Land Access Membership Action Team of the California Food and Justice Coalition.
5. Schattman, Rachel and Cannella, Mark. "Maintaining Farm Identity Through Alternative Marketing Practices." August 2008. Prepared for Intervale Center.
6. "Farm Producer Survey: Preliminary Report." Intervale Center. 2008

## **[BP 2]**

### **[Agricultural Development<Farm Incubator/Workforce Development<ALBA]**

#### **1. Best Practice in: Ag Workforce Development/Farm Incubator Hybrid**

2. Name of Organization and website: Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA), <http://www.albafarmers.org/>

#### **3. Location and Land/Site:**

ALBA owns and operates two training and education farms in Monterey County, CA.

-The Rural Development Center (RDC) is a 110-acre farm that hosts PEPA. There are usually about 16 farmers growing 50 different crops on this farm.

-“The Farm Training and Research Center, also known as the Triple M Ranch, is located in northern Monterey County. This 195-acre farm (60 acres of which can be cultivated due to a natural lands easement) demonstrates soil, water and habitat conservation in the environmentally sensitive Elkhorn Slough watershed. The farm hosts many workshops and field days every year” (albafarmers.org/farms). Also, some farmers lease land here.

#### **4. Ownership and Operation: Private non-profit with Board of Directors**

5. Stated Mission: “to advance economic viability, social equity and ecological land management among limited-resource and aspiring farmers. We work to create opportunities for family farms while providing education and demonstration on conservation, habitat restoration, marketing and whole farm planning” (albafarmers.org).

#### **6. Program summary/overview**

ALBA consists of a six-month agricultural workforce development program targeted towards Latino immigrants who are current or former farmworkers that is called the Small Farmer Education Program or Programa Educativo para Pequeños Agricultores (**PEPA**). PEPA is a prerequisite for entrance to the farm incubator program. ALBA also has a collective marketing arm, ALBA Organics, which sells to institutions such as Stanford University.

#### 8. Key features:

-*Training Program*: PEPA course is officially taught in Spanish, but in practice it's bilingual—most staff members are bilingual. Course is accredited by Hartnell College. Course emphasis is on “learning by doing”, but classroom learning is also essential. (See *PEPA Course Description for more details*:

[www.albafarmers.org/pdfs/PEPA%20Course%20Description.pdf](http://www.albafarmers.org/pdfs/PEPA%20Course%20Description.pdf))

-*Farm Incubator*: Upon graduation from PEPA, farmers may lease up to ½ an acre the first year and more in later years. The incubator provides workshops and short courses for continuing education, and technical assistance as needed. After three years, ALBA farmer are supposed to leave the land, but this is not strictly enforced; less experienced farmers often benefit from the mentorship of experienced farmers. However, if farmers stay past three years, they pay market rates for land and water.

-*Marketing Assistance/Food Hub*: ALBA Organics is a produce distribution program of ALBA. The mission of ALBA Organics is to serve ALBA participants and local farmers who want help in accessing markets. ALBA Organics has a cooling facility on site and a delivery truck.

#### 9. Challenges and recommendations for improvement

It is difficult for many non-farmers who graduate to use the skills learned in the PEPA course to start their own farm.

#### 10. Impact

Most graduating farmers reported that skills related to agricultural production were the most important they learned in the course (CIRS Evaluation 1).

Of the 500 graduates as of 2006, 50% were still farming 4 years after completion (Grounding Ourselves).

#### 11. Plans for the future:

- Expand the use of greenhouses.
- May offer PEPA in English.

#### 12. Resources used besides the website:

-“From the ground up”

(<http://newfarm.rodaleinstitute.org/features/2005/0505/alba/index.shtml>)

-“Grounding Ourselves: Innovative Land Tenure Models in California.” Land Access Membership Action Team of the California Food and Justice Coalition;

Written by: Sean Gillon, Laura-Anne Minkoff, and Rebecca Thistlethwaite

(<http://www.albafarmers.org/publications.html>)

-From Farmworker to Farmer: An Evaluation of the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association Small Farmer Education Program, California Institute for Rural Studies; by Ron Storchlic and Cathy Wirth.

October 2005; ([www.cirsinc.org/Documents/ALBA\\_ReportExecutiveSummary.pdf](http://www.cirsinc.org/Documents/ALBA_ReportExecutiveSummary.pdf))

-Immigrant Farming Programs and Resources: A Guide to Projects, People, Places, Publications, and Other Information on Immigrant Farming Activities Across the United States; By Marla Rhodes and Hugh Joseph, January 2004; ([smallfarms.wsu.edu/ws-pdfs/ImmigrantFarmingGuide.pdf](http://smallfarms.wsu.edu/ws-pdfs/ImmigrantFarmingGuide.pdf)).

**[BP 3]**

**[Agricultural Development> Farm Viability Enhancement]**

1. Best practice in: Farm Viability Enhancement>Business planning program
2. Name of organization and website: Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program; <http://www.vhcb.org/viability.html>
3. Location: Vermont
4. Ownership and Operation: Public-private partnership. Funded publicly (by Vermont Housing and Conservation Board) and through outside grants, managed by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) in collaboration with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. The work is contracted to private consultants.
5. Stated Mission: To enhance the financial success and long-term economic viability of Vermont farms by providing business-planning services combined with technical assistance targeted to each individual farmer's needs.
6. Program overview/summary:

The Farm Viability Program “offers in-depth financial analysis, assistance in goal setting and an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the farm business, and guidance and assistance in the development of a plan for meeting these goals” (2009 Annual Report). The end result of this year long process is the completion of a written business plan. Some farms, depending on their situation, receive other services as needed: farm transfer planning, cash flow or enterprise analysis, and technical assistance. In the second year, following the completion of the written business plan, farms receive follow-up visits from a “business planner, farm financial analyst, farm management specialist, or other person who is qualified to collect and analyze data” (2007 Guidelines for Year Two Farm Viability Evaluations).
7. Structure and Management:
  - Advisory Board consisting of eight members: four “Ex Officio” members and four farmer members “chosen to reflect, generally, the agricultural sectors as identified as potential recipients of the Program’s services”, each with two-year terms (Description of Goals and Structure 5).
  - Program Coordinator is a VHCB staff member; contracts provision of services to outside parties (see below).
  - The management coordinator or “point person” assembles a team of experts to work with each farmer after having met with the farmer and determined his/her specific needs. The consultants providing technical assistance and business planning support often come from one or more of the following organizations receiving grants from the VHCB: University of Vermont Farm Viability, Intervale Center's Success on Farms Program, NOFA-VT Business Planning & Technical Assistance, and Working Landscapes, Inc. Additional farm business consultants and

technical specialists are contracted directly by VHCB. Another partner is the Vermont Small Business Development Center, which provides a variety of services through grantee organizations.

8. Key features, keys to success, important information:

**Application and Enrollment:** Applications for the program were initially accepted on a rolling, year-round, first come-first serve basis. As of the beginning of fiscal year 2010, Farmer applications are reviewed on a quarterly basis, with four enrollment deadlines throughout the year. Moreover, a \$75 application fee has been added for applicants. According to the 2009 Annual Report, “These changes were instituted by the Advisory Board as a way to streamline the enrollment process, enroll farms that are the best fit for the program as competition for the program increases, and to encourage farmers’ commitment to complete the program” (7).

Staff reviews applications. According to the Farm Viability Program Farmer Enrollment Process, adopted by the Advisory Board on 8/25/09, selection is based on:

- Enthusiasm for and commitment to the planning process,
- need, impact and quality,
- clear project and concept,
- planning that best utilizes the program’s resources,
- geographic distribution of farms served, and
- availability and interest of service providers to work with the farm.

**Program Participants:** “Farmers that enroll in the program are often pursuing some kind of transition or expansion, such as initiating new products or on-farm processing, expanding into new markets, constructing a new barn, transferring farm ownership, or examining energy efficiency. In some cases farmers may be preparing to apply for a grant or loan. In other cases farmers are simply interested in setting and documenting their goals, plans and finances with the assistance of a business planning professional. All enrolled farms are also offered technical assistance, in such areas as marketing, herd management, production, facilities design, or bookkeeping” (2009 Annual Report).

**Year One:** Business planning and technical assistance. *[VHCB’s 2007 “Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program: GUIDELINES FOR FARM BUSINESS PLANS” (from website) explains what a model business plan will look like]*

**Year Two:** Farm Viability Evaluations: includes an on-farm visit and data collection to “measure profitability...[and] productivity, ascertain quality of life issues, collect information on implementation of the business plan, determine the farm’s on-going business planning and technical assistance needs...[and] help the farmer fill out a Farm Viability evaluation survey...” (VHCB’s 2007 “Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program: Guidelines for Farm Business Plans”). The analyst summarizes this information in a written report.



Business Plan Implementation Assistance: The Program distributes grant funding to select farms (and agriculturally-related businesses involved in local food processing, marketing or distribution) that wish to implement the changes that have been studied during the business planning process. Implementation assistance includes further business planning, financial analysis, and professional services to implement business plan projects. Obtaining grants is competitive as many more farmers apply for funding through the Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program than those that are accepted due to the limited funding available.

#### 9. Impact:

From the Program's 2009 Annual Report: "Approximately 230 Vermont farms have used the Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program to develop a business plan. All but three of these farms remain in business, and 96% of participating farmers believe the services received are helping make their business more profitable. In fact we have found that the majority of participating farms see increases in gross sales and net profits the year following their business plan. Nearly all farmers (90%) expect to use their business plan to help them remain focused on their business goals, and more than two-thirds of farmers will use it to measure financial progress, and in making decisions regarding the feasibility of business expansion or diversification. Additionally, three-quarters of participating farmers find that the planning process helps them see their business with a new perspective and identify strengths and weaknesses in the business."

#### 10. Financial status and Funding:

*(see page 8 in 2009 Annual Report, from website, for details).*

The Vermont Farm Viability Program is funded by VHCB, which is supported by the Vermont Legislature, as well as by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and private foundations such as the John Merck Fund.

#### 12. Plans for the future:

Program is in the process of contracting external consultants to:

- evaluate and analyze the program process and impact, and
- develop an in-depth analysis of the direct and indirect economic impacts of Farm Viability Program investments.

#### 13. Resources used (all available from the Program's website):

- Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program Brochure
  - Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program 2009 Annual Report
  - VHCB's Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program: Description of Goals and Structure, September 2, 2003
  - Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program: Farm Viability Program Farmer Enrollment Process, adopted by the Advisory Board on 8/25/09,
- Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program: 2007 Guidelines for Year Two Farm Viability Evaluations
  - VHCB's 2007
  - "Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program: GUIDELINES FOR FARM BUSINESS PLANS

**[BP 4]**  
**[Agricultural Development<Ag Workforce Development<Michigan State University Student Organic Farm]**

1. Best practice in: Ag Workforce Development<Organic Farm School

2. Name of organization and website: Michigan State University's Student Organic Farm (SOF). <http://www.msuorganicfarm.com/>.

3. Location and site: Holt, Michigan. Farm is ten acres, certified organic, and includes 16,000 square feet of passive solar greenhouses ("hoop houses"), as well as 2,000 square feet of heated greenhouses.

4. Ownership and Operation: University-owned; The MSU Student Organic Farm and programs are managed and coordinated by the SOF Steering Team with input from the farm staff, students and other faculty.

5. Stated Mission: From website, "The Organic Farmer Training program is committed to successfully preparing graduates to operate their own farm or community food system endeavor. Graduates will be qualified to run small-scale farms, work closely with existing farmers, and be advocates of local food systems based on first hand experience and training with local organic production."

6. Training Program Overview:

Executive Summary, from website: "This program is designed to be a 9 month, intensive, full time program. The program includes practical hands on management of the Student Organic Farm along with workshops, lectures, skills trainings and learning community activities. All components are important in order for the participants to achieve the outlined learning outcomes. Part time participation is not possible due to the intensive nature and structure of the program involving year round production and the emphasis of the cohort as a learning community."

The program starts at the beginning of March and ends in November. As part of the *curriculum (which is available to the public on their website)*, students gain experience in marketing as they manage a 48-week CSA (that serves over 100 families), a 6-month farm stand, and sales to the university's dining services. This is in addition to learning organic production and every other aspect of farm management.

7. Farm staff includes a training program coordinator/lead instructor, a Production manager, a CSA manager/assistant instructor, a farm stand manager/assistant instructor, a propagation manager, plus guest presenters, volunteers, and interns.

**[BP 5]**

**[Agricultural Development<Ag Workforce Development<Stone Barns Center]**

1. Best practice in: Ag Workforce Development, Farm Viability Enhancement, and Agritourism

2. Name of organization and website: Stone Barns Center for Food & Agriculture, <http://www.stonebarnscenter.org/>

3. Location and site: 25 miles north of Manhattan in Pocantico Hills, New York. Their four-season farm is 80-acres.

4. Ownership and Operation: Nonprofit 501(c)(3)

5. Stated Mission: To create a healthy and sustainable food system and improve the way America eats and farms. They do this by increasing public awareness of healthy, seasonal and sustainable food, training farmers in resilient, restorative farming techniques, and educating children about the sources of their food, and preparing them to steward the land that provides it.

6. Program overview/summary: Stone Barns farm programs include: 1. A Growing Farmers Initiative that is “designed to increase the number of sustainable small and mid-size farms, especially in the Northeast,” by offering young farmers full-time paid internships on the farm in which participants learn hands-on about every aspect of running a farm. They also benefiting from networking opportunities with other regional farms. The Center also hosts hands-on workshops and conferences to teach farmers throughout the region to attend, including an annual Young Farmers Conference. 2. Children’s Education programs, and 3. Public Awareness programs including tours, lectures, and classes. In addition, Stone Barns Center is home to a fine dining restaurant, Blue Hills at Stone Barns, who’s renowned chef rents space on the site uses fresh food from the farm to create exquisite “multi-course farmer’s feasts.” The Center is also home to Blue Hill Café, a lighter, more casual restaurant owned by the Center.

7. Business model, structure of organization: Board of Directors and large staff.

8. Keys to Success/Key features:

*Year-round growing:* The Center constantly experiments to enhance the productivity of the farm through all four seasons with minimal crop protection. They grow parsnips and other hardy winter vegetables even in February with no protection. Other vegetables grow in unheated tunnels and hoop houses (aka high tunnels). Farmers also modified low tunnels to provide added protection from frost and wind. Farmers also use minimally heated greenhouses for micro-greens.

*Agritourism:* The Center’s public awareness programs children education programs bring the community to the farm, and make them more likely to buy food locally and eat at their restaurants.

9. Financial status and Funding

About 40-44% of the revenue is generated through farm/café sales, fees, rental, and investment, while the other 56-60% comes from contributions/donations.

The total expenses, including farm operations and research, administration costs, facilities, and educational programs sum to about \$4.4 million (2009 Annual Report, from website).

**[BP 6]**

**[Agricultural Development<Farm Incubator/Workforce Development<Seed Farm]**

1. Best practice in: Farm Incubator and Training program

2. Name of organization and website: Seed Farm,  
<http://sites.google.com/site/theseedfarm/>

3. Location and site description: Emmaus, PA (in Lehigh County); Initial **25 acre** project site for the incubator is located on "Seem Seed Farm", a 451 acre agricultural property owned by the county. In the 25-acre site, there are 10 acres is prime tillable soil, two large ponds for irrigation and livestock watering, and basic agricultural infrastructure is available. The site is transitioning from conventional to organic farming.

4. Ownership and Operation: *Public-private partnership*; Lehigh County in partnership with various nonprofits including PA Farm Link, Wildlands Conservancy, PA Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), as well as Penn State University Cooperative Extension Service.

5. Stated Mission: To start and grow new sustainable farms and farmers and to support the development of a vibrant local food system.

6. Program overview/summary:

Program began in March 2009 when it received \$300,000 of funding from Lehigh County plus a USDA Beginning farmer and rancher grant. The Seed Farm program lasts up to three years. The first year is the "apprentice" phase: a training and educational program (*see website for course description*) and successful "graduates" of the apprenticeship then transition to the "farm stewardship" phase of year two. During year three, farmers progress further towards independence.

From website:

**Project Goals**

1. Provide land, training, infrastructure and other support for new farmers to start their own agricultural enterprises.
2. Help mentor new and existing area farmers through a network of experienced Lehigh Valley farmers who have successfully adopted sustainable production and marketing systems.
3. Create a demonstration model of profitable and sustainable agricultural enterprises for new and existing farmers.
4. Be a focal point for building a strong local food system in the Lehigh Valley.

5. Provide educational opportunities for residents of Southeastern Pennsylvania to learn about the importance of local agriculture and local food production systems.
6. Help link new farmers to existing preserved farmland in the Lehigh Valley for lease and purchase opportunities.

**[BP 7]**

**[Food Innovation Center<Kitchen Incubator<La Cocina]**

1. Best practice in: Kitchen Incubator

2. Name of organization and website: La Cocina; <http://www.lacocinasf.org/>

3. Location: San Francisco, CA

4. Ownership and Operation: La Cocina is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

5. Stated Mission: To cultivate low-income food entrepreneurs as they formalize and grow their businesses by providing affordable commercial kitchen space, industry-specific technical assistance, and access to market opportunities. La Cocina focuses primarily on women from communities of color and immigrant communities. Their vision is that entrepreneurs will become economically self-sufficient and contribute to a vibrant economy doing what they love to do.

6. Program overview/summary: La Cocina is a non-profit incubator kitchen that provides affordable commercial kitchen space, technical assistance and industry market access to low-income entrepreneurs who are launching, growing and formalizing food businesses. It is a shared-use commercial kitchen that also accepts applications from commercial users.

7. Business model, structure of organization: 8 member Board of Directors and five hired staff (3 full-time).

8. Key features, keys to success, important information:

*The Kitchen:* As their website describes, “La Cocina is a 4,400 square foot, full-service, shared-use commercial kitchen. There are four complete prep stations (approx. 2,000 sq. feet), along with a full range of commercial kitchen equipment. Commercial users have access to hourly rental of the facilities and the equipment.” *(See website for detailed description of layout/design and cooking equipment).*

*Requirements for Incubator Applicants:* La Cocina requires that participants be:

- Flexible in sharing equipment and able to work with the people around them.
- Capable of scheduling their kitchen use times in advance, adhering to their schedules and planning realistically.
- Willing to share financial and business information and statistics with La Cocina staff.
- Willing to implement changes and take advice in order to improve their business or product.

- Open to finding new ways of doing business, including potential partnerships and/or collaborations with other tenants.
- Receptive to La Cocina technical assistance and training.
- Able to comply with La Cocina food safety and sanitation policies.
- Responsible for following the rules and regulations of La Cocina.

#### *Recruitment of participants*

Most participants are referred to La Cocina by organizations that help people write business plans. Monthly orientation sessions, publicized with fliers, etc., are also held.

#### *Stages of the Incubator program:*

i. *Applicant Screening and Interview Process:* La Cocina carefully screens applicants in order to find indicators that suggest an entrepreneur's business readiness level. A formal assessment process examines each applicant's:

- Income Level: Low-income applicants get highest priority
- Business Stage: "Ready-to Start" businesses get priority
- Business Size: Businesses of up to 5 people with below \$35,000 in assets are La Cocina's highest priority.
- Skills and Competencies: La Cocina assesses individual characteristics such as experience, personal motivation, and willingness/ability to learn and adapt, etc.
- Product Viability: La Cocina staff samples products and menu items from each business to see if the proposed product or concept has the potential to be successful.
- After initial screening, applicants go through an intensive interview process, beginning with the Advisory committee, consisting of 15-20 people from different areas of the food business.
- Applicants who pass this step are then "interviewed by the program director, the culinary director and 2-3 additional people from the advisory board who are experts in the applicant's product area" (Hall 71).

#### *ii. Pre-incubation:*

- For those admitted into the program, there is a six-month "pre-incubation" phase during which participants receive personalized technical assistance to establish the foundations of their businesses.
- The program director and advisory committee members work with each participant to draft a comprehensive plan of action with goals for the participant to meet, and resources so the participant knows where to go for help in each area.
- A number of benchmarks are set to mark each business's progress. If the participant meets these benchmarks during the six-month period, she is fully accepted into the program.

iii. *Incubation:*

- Program Participants pay an average of \$13/hour for kitchen rental space.
- Commercial users pay an average of \$35/hour for kitchen rental space.
- La Cocina offers free or subsidized one-on-one technical assistance in marketing, operations, product, sales and finances for food businesses.
- La Cocina offers workshops twice a month with experts in different areas of the business.
- La Cocina connects vendors to market opportunities and co-branding for the mainstream market. Commercial kitchen participants may have opportunities to do catering gigs with local businesses.
- La Cocina is also working to match incubator businesses with mentors who have been through the process before and can provide advice and support.
- Commercial users also rent food storage space from La Cocina at a rate of about \$50/hour, providing additional revenue to the organization.

9. Impact:

- 45 formal jobs created/retained in 2008.
- Sales for La Cocina businesses in 2008 estimated at \$700,000, a 20% growth from 2007.

10. Financial status and Funding:

Budget: La Cocina's annual budget is between \$600,000 and \$700,000 for the facility, all programs and all staff. They currently have 3 full-time staff and 2 part-time staff.

Funding: 60% comes from grants and foundations, 10% from city funds and individual donors and about 30% from internal program revenues.

11. Plans for the future

La Cocina is launching a new initiative to help low-income San Francisco residents create sustainable mobile food businesses. Given popularity and low start-up costs, mobile food presents an incredible opportunity for low-income entrepreneurs to improve their economic situation while uplifting our community.

La Cocina is also looking to expand the kitchen and duplicate the program.

12. Sources Besides Website:

- Much of the data and figures come from a 2009 PowerPoint presentation given by Caleb Zigaas, then Director of Operations (now Acting Executive Director) for La Cocina.
- Hall, Emma. "Measuring the Economic Impact of a Nonprofit Small Business Kitchen Incubator: A Case Study of Nuestra Culinary Ventures." University of Pennsylvania. Interview notes with Caleb Zigaas from Appendix 6 (p.71).





**[BP 8]**

**[Food Innovation Center<Kitchen Incubator and Food Processing Center<Rutgers Food Innovation Center]**

1. Best practice in: Commercial Kitchen Incubator, Food Processing Center, and Farm Viability Enhancement/Business Development Program

2. Name of organization and website: Rutgers Food Innovation Center, <http://www.foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/>.

3. Location and site: Bridgeton, NJ.

4. Ownership and Operation: Rutgers University

5. Stated Mission: From FIC Overview/Case History (downloaded from website), the mission of the FIC is “To stimulate and support sustainable economic growth and prosperity to the food and agricultural industries in the New Jersey region by providing businesses with innovative research, customized practical solutions, resources for business incubation and a trusted source for information and guidance.”

6. Program overview/summary: Opened in 2000 as a “service-centric” program for existing food/agriculture businesses, providing business support and technical expertise. In 2008, the FIC shifted from a business incubator model that served food businesses to a “kitchen incubator” that provides not only business support, but also facilities for businesses to operate in, as well as food and business research. The new state-of-the-art new facility is 23,000 square in Bridgeton. The FIC claims that this 8-year waiting period was beneficial as it allowed the Center to determine demand for its services before making a significant investment, and to “have adequate time to apply for federal, state, and community capital grants, and other sources of funding, that would ultimately reduce the financial burden and operating costs of the Center (the Center’s goal was to build the facility with 100% of costs coming from grants, which it was able to accomplish).” The FIC offers a number of online courses and workshops for entrepreneurs and established businesses on topics ranging from running a farmers market (\$75) to crafting a business plan (\$25). The Center also periodically hosts live seminars and conferences.

The FIC offers the following services:

*Business mentoring services:* The FIC charges businesses \$85/hour (minimum of 3 sessions per month) for assistance in management strategy, financial and accounting strategy, marketing and sales strategy, and international trade strategy. *Manufacturing and operations services, and product development services.*

7. Farm to School initiative: The NJ state government has partnered with the FIC to develop new and creative ways of implementing NJ produce into school meals. The project is being funded by the NJ Dept. of Agriculture, which received a \$51,000 grant from the USDA’s National School Lunch Program.

#### 8. Facilities:

- a) A client services area with classrooms, research kitchens and laboratory, a library, conference room, etc.
- b) A shared-use processing facility with “hot process,” “dry process,” “cold process”, and “cold assembly.”

8. Staff, Organization and Resource Network: The FIC’s part-time and full-time staff run the incubator on a daily basis. An “internal” network of Rutgers faculty and services provide useful resources for the FIC and it’s client. An external network, “composed of federal, state, and county agencies, including USDA Rural Development, USDA Agricultural Research Service, NJ Dept of Agriculture, NJ Economic Development Authority, NJ Department of Labor, Workforce Investment Boards, SBA, SBDC, and others,” provides additional support.

#### 9. Impact

From Overview, “Within its fifth year of operation in its incubator facility, it has been estimated that the Food Innovation Center will facilitate the creation of over 1,000 net new jobs, and over \$200 million in cumulative new revenue for its clients, in addition to millions of dollars in local tax revenue...In 2011, the Center plans to “graduate” its first business, the world’s largest gluten-free manufacturer, which chose to establish its first US operation in New Jersey because of the expertise and infrastructure provided by the Food Innovation Center. This company will then relocate to its own facility, and is currently evaluating production operations that are approximately 50,000 sq. ft. in size, which will likely employ over 50 individuals.”

*Recognition:* Awarded “Incubator of the Year”, in the services and manufacturing category, by the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA),

recognized as a national “Innovative Program Model” by USDA Rural Development,

recognized as a national “Agricultural Innovation Center Demonstration Program”, by USDA CSREES, based upon a “demonstrated track record of achieving value-added successes through its use of highly qualified and experienced personnel, a well developed work plan with an emphasis on economic development and a commitment to community partnerships”, and a handful of other awards.

#### 10. Funding

The facilities cost \$8 million to build, which was almost entirely obtained through grants US Economic Development Administration, US Department of Agriculture, State of New Jersey, Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, New Jersey Casino Reinvestment Development Authority, New Jersey Commission on Science and Technology, New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Cumberland Empowerment Zone, and the City of Bridgeton.

**[BP 9]**

**[Marketing and Distribution<Food Hub<La Montanita]**

1. Best practice in: Food Hub

2. Name of organization and website: La Montanita Food Cooperative;  
<http://www.lamontanita.coop/>

3. Location: Albuquerque region of New Mexico  
Four stores: Nob Hill, Valley, Santa Fe, and Gallup.

4. Ownership and Operation: Owned by consumers; there are about 14,000 paying members of the co-op.

5. Stated Mission: Global Ends Policy:

A cooperative community based in the shared benefits of healthy food, sound environmental practices and a strengthened local economy with results that justify the resources used. "The co-op's main focus is in helping mid-size farms from disappearing," La Montanita enterprise developer Steve Warshawer said. "It's where the most diversity, coupled with reasonable economies of scale, can be found. Medium-sized farms and ranches also create jobs, and preserve family farming and ranching."

The Co-op Trade initiative is an expansion of the co-op's efforts to support local farmers, ranchers and producers, bring high quality local/regional food to consumers and build the local food economy.

6. Program overview/summary:

La Montanita's Food-Shed warehouse, known as the Cooperative Distribution Center (CDC), delivers food to the co-op's four stores, while also picking up produce from farms and dropping off farm supplies en route to minimize trucking miles. La Montanita's trucks also link growers with other wholesale buyers/markets, including Whole Foods. Additionally, the CDC provides needed post harvest refrigerated space for local producers (Seydel 3). To meet wholesale demand, the CDC also helps new local food businesses get started "by arranging business loans, distributing new products, and mobilizing member investments" (Meter 11).

7. Business model, structure of organization:

Members elect nine other members who have volunteered to serve on the Board of Directors. Board members serve three-year terms. The Board sets goals, provides vision and guidance for the organization, and is responsible for hiring a General Manager who manages the business as a whole and hires and oversees staff to take care of the co-op for other members. In 2009, the co-op paid its staff nearly \$6.5 million (2009 Annual Report).

## 8. Key features, keys to success, important information, and projects of the Program

*History:* La Montanita began distribution of regionally produced products in the spring of 2006. Two drivers and one truck delivered over \$100,000 of meat, eggs, milk and produce from about 30 producers during this first year of operation.

*Beginnings and growth:* La Montanita's Co-op Trade Initiative began its regional "food shed" project with one truck in 2006. That year, the coop delivered over \$100,000 of goods from about 30 farms. La Montanita engaged Whole Foods, Raley's, Cid's, Los Poblanos and others to build the wholesale market for this product. It now serves a 300-mile radius around Albuquerque.

*Warehouse:* In January of 2007 La Montanita opened its warehouse, the Cooperative Distribution Center (CDC), the hub of the food shed project, in Albuquerque. The CDC provides pick-up, supply and storage services for producers and distribution of regional products to their four co-op stores and other retail outlets and co-ops. The facility contains 3,000 square feet of refrigerated storage, 1,000 square feet of frozen and 6,000 square feet of dry storage.

*Local producers:* La Montanita is a leader in the local food movement, handling over 1100 local products each year from hundreds of local producers. 64% of products handled by the CDC are local. However, the Co-op also buys goods from non-local producers, such as Stonyfield Farms, to help cover overhead costs. About 20% of total store sales in local food.

*Eco Label Project:* The Beneficial Farms Eco Label, a project of the Co-op Trade Initiative, is used to assure customers that local foods that aren't certified organic are produced in a sustainable way that follows organic farming principles. A staff member with farming experience works with regional farmers who want to get the Beneficial Farms Eco label on their products to make sure they meet their requirements for sustainable farming practices.

*Partners:* The Co-op Trade Initiative collaborates with the New Mexico Food-Shed Alliance, The New Mexico Agricultural Task Force of the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments, The University of New Mexico Sustainability Studies Program and others in an effort to push regional food-shed and sustainability forward into mainstream consciousness.

## 9. Challenges, obstacles faced

The shortage of regional farmers and product is a major problem for La Montanita's Coop Trade Initiative as well as for farmers markets (Seydel 4).

*Pricing:* Establishing a balance between paying the producer as much as possible while providing a low retail price in stores for the co-op members has been a

challenge. La Montanita staff is working with producers, retail stores, and members to keep prices fair for everyone.

#### 10. Financial status and Funding:

*(See La Montanita's Consolidated Income Statement in their 2009 Annual Report for details)*

Financial status: 2009 Net income (Total sales revenue minus expenses/costs)= **\$908,229\***

(\*This is before patronage refund and income tax expense; expect net income after taxes and refunds to be less than half this sum based on past years' data.)

Funding: The co-op is funded through it's own revenue streams and members' fees. In 2005, La Montanita officially became a co-op through a \$1.7 million loan from National Co-op Bank.

#### 11. Plans for the future

"The Co-op Trade Initiative is moving forward, giving grants to fledgling growers and value added producers and adding a few national family farmed products, like maple syrup, that are not produced in this region, to help defray the CDC overhead. The Co-op Trade Initiative's future planning includes: a move from leased trucks to purchased trucks to allow for the use of alternative fuels, creation of a series of retail markets to facilitate better access to goods and services in Food-Shed hinterlands and partnering these added Co-op locations with product pick-up depots to consolidate trucking routes. Future plans also include work on a solar array to power the large coolers needed for storage at the CDC" (Seydel 4).

#### 12. Resources used besides La Montanita's website:

Meter, Ken. "Promising Community-Based Food System Initiatives." May 2010. Crossroads Resource Center.

Seydel, Robin. "Sustainable Sustenance: Building the Regional Food-shed." December 31, 2008;

<http://journalofsustainability.com/lifetype/index.php?op=ViewArticle&articleId=33&blogId=1>

2009 Annual Report, La Montanita's Board of Directors.

[http://www.lamontanita.coop/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=17&Itemid=33](http://www.lamontanita.coop/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=17&Itemid=33)

Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF2) Regional Food Hub Subcommittee. "Regional Food Hubs: Linking producers to new markets." May 24, 2010.

[http://ngfn.org/resources/ngfn-database/knowledge/RFHub%20Presentation\\_complete%20version\\_5.24.pdf/view](http://ngfn.org/resources/ngfn-database/knowledge/RFHub%20Presentation_complete%20version_5.24.pdf/view)

**[BP 10]**

**[Marketing and Distribution<CSA Network<Just Food's CSA in NYC]**

1. Best practice in: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Network

2. Name of organization and website: Just Food's "CSA in NYC" Program;

<http://www.justfood.org/csa/just-foods-role>

3. Location: New York City

4. Ownership and Operation: Just food is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

5. Stated Mission: Since 1996, Just Food's CSA in NYC Program has sought to build the CSA movement throughout New York City in order to increase communities' access to fresh, locally grown food and to support regional farmers. While expanding the CSA movement by starting new CSAs, we also work to create a strong network and to provide ongoing support for existing CSAs in the city.

6. Program overview/summary:

Just Food is an organization consisting of several programs (including CSA in NYC) aimed at uniting local farms and city residents of all economic backgrounds with fresh, seasonal, sustainably grown food.

Just Food's CSA in NYC program helps urban residents form and manage CSAs, and matches them with regional farmers who then deliver the CSA food from the farm to a distribution location in the city where CSA members pick up their shares. Just Food serves as an "incubator" for CSAs, "training community organizations or volunteers to start and run CSAs, with the goal that they will operate independently after one year".

7. Key features, keys to success, important information:

The resources Just Food offers to participating CSAs include:

- Matchmaking and support to connect farmers with community members and organizations that are interested in starting new CSAs.

- A monthly workshop series covering topics that help existing groups sustain their CSAs and help new CSAs get up and running.

- One-on-one support to CSA groups within the network. Just Food supports the development of each new CSA group by providing a yearlong, 4-session workshop series; ongoing technical assistance; and the CSA in NYC toolkit, a 200+ page manual. In addition, CSA groups are invited to attend an annual conference to learn from other CSA groups and to network.

-Information on managing a CSA through the CSA in NYC Toolkit and an on-line CSA Resource Center.

-Assistance to CSA groups to develop flexible payment options and outreach strategies to make CSA membership available to all community members, regardless of their income. Just Food has provided AmeriCorps\* VISTA volunteers to more than 15 CSAs in low-income communities across the city to provide support for CSA startup or development.

-Training for CSA Chefs to give them the skills to conduct cooking demos at their distribution sites or at special events throughout the season.

-A yearly CSA in NYC Conference which brings CSAs organizers and members from throughout the city together with farmers and food activists to share information about CSAs as well as broader food system issues (<http://www.justfood.org/csa/just-foods-role>).

#### 8. Challenges, obstacles faced:

- Reaching low-income customers: few CSAs (20 out of 90 in NYC) accept food stamps, and some customers cannot even afford CSA prices with food stamps.

#### 9. Impact:

- Since 1996, Just Food has helped to start over 80 CSA programs in NYC. This number continues to grow as we work with new groups and new farmers to start additional sites every year.
- In 2008: More than 40 organic or sustainable farms within a 250-mile radius of New York City sold food to 13,950 New Yorkers through 62 CSAs, 13 of which were new that year. 2,565 of the residents served were low-income; 24 core farmers; 30+ associate Farmers; 'CSA in NYC' farmers earned \$2.2 million. (Source: *Just Food 2008 Annual Report*)

#### 10. Financial Status and Funding

- The cost of the program (in 2008) was \$92,207, accounting for 12% of Just Food's total expenses. No revenue is derived from the program.
- In 2008, Just Food's total revenue was total revenue is \$1,047,992, exceeding their expenses by about \$250,000. Just Food receives 54% of their funding from foundations, and the rest from corporate sponsors, the government, and individual donations.

**[BP 11]**

**[Community Food Education<School Food Education (by Private Organization) <Green Mountain Farm to School]**

1. Best Practice in: School Food Education, School Gardens, and Farm to School
2. Name of organization and website: Green Mountain Farm to School (GMFTS), <http://www.greenmountainfarmtoschool.org/>
3. Location: Northeast Kingdom, VT
4. Ownership and Operation: GMFTS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a six-member board.
5. Stated Mission: Green Mountain Farm-to-School (GMFTS) was founded with the purpose of addressing “the need for improved childhood nutrition and the decline of Vermont agriculture.” “GMTS promotes the health and wellbeing of Vermont's children, farms and communities by providing programs to connect schools and farms through food and education.”
6. Program overviews/summaries:

*A) SPROUTS:* Sprouts is a year-round after-school program promoting healthy lifestyle choices through hands-on garden and cooking activities. As the website explains, “through hands-on, inquiry-based gardening and cooking activities, [SPROUTS] seek[s] to increase students’ exposure to fresh, nutritious foods, recognizing that when students have participated in growing, harvesting and preparing foods they are more likely to try new foods and make healthy food choices.” The program’s goals are to:

- give students the knowledge and skills they need to make healthy food choices,
- produce fresh, nutritious foods for the school cafeteria, and
- create an outdoor garden classroom to complement and support learning in the classroom.

*B) The Farm-to-School Network:* Provides Vermont schools with on-going coordination of farm-to-school activities that promote the health and wellbeing of students, farms and communities. Activities include local food purchasing, farm field trips, educational workshops, taste tests and harvest festivals.

*C) Farm Direct:* Green Mountain Farm Direct (GMFD) is a regional food distribution system that provides Vermont farm products to schools and other institutions.

These programs are currently being provided to a number of public schools in the Northeast Kingdom area.



7. Business model, structure of organization:

Six board members; Six staff members: 3 full-time (Executive Director, Education Coordinator, Farm to School Coordinator), 3 volunteers (two Nutrition and Agriculture AmeriCorps Educators and one intern).

8. Program Management

Sprouts has a curriculum [*see website for details*] that GMFTS staff developed and the Education Director for GMFTS trains the AmeriCorps staff how to implement it.

Sprouts visits 5 schools every week (1 school/day) to run the after school program. Sprouts staff stays with the 5 schools for the entire school year and also helps to run farm & nutrition workshops in the classrooms or farm field trips at local farms.

The Farm to School Coordinators help facilitate farm to school committee meetings at the schools, work with teachers to encourage workshops and farm field trips, and organize monthly local food taste tests. They each work with either 5 or 6 schools (not all of the 20 schools are Farm to School schools, some just have the after school programs).

GMFTS charges \$50/Sprouts after school program and \$2500-3000 for the farm to school/farm direct services for the school year (depending on size of school).

9. Impact:

*Sprouts:* In 2008, 329 students participated in after-school classes , 191 after-school lessons were taught, 1642 pounds of food harvested from gardens during summer 2008, students averaged a 22% improvement in their pre-Sprouts and post-Sprouts test scores, and over 20 varieties of fruits and vegetables grown in the school gardens. In 2009, Sprouts' fifteen school gardens produced over 2,000 pounds of fresh, organic produce for use in the school cafeterias.

*Farm to School network: Program Impact in the 2008-2009 Academic Year*

GMFTS provided over 2,000 students with fresh, local foods including apples, meat, produce and berries.

-Promoting students' lifelong healthy eating habits: "Working in schools, GMFTS can target children at an age when life-lasting behaviors are formed and can seek to promote healthy eating behaviors. Schools serve meals to students twice a day and by serving local food in the school cafeteria, the program ensures that every student, regardless of his or her socioeconomic group, has access to fresh, nutritious foods. In addition, when students make direct connections between their health and the foods they consume, they become informed consumers and gain the knowledge and skills they need to grow and prepare low-cost, nutritious foods."

*Farm Direct: During the 2009-2010 Academic Year*

GMFD worked with 7 schools and 4 senior meal sites to purchase local food from 13 Vermont farms.

10. Financial status and Funding:

2008-2009:

*Expenses:*

Program Services \$69,519 .79  
Management and General \$10,748 .64  
Development \$10,891 .15  
*Total Expenses \$91,159 .58*

*Revenue:*

Individual and Corporate: \$32,811.10  
Foundations and Grants: \$35,821 .30  
Program Services: \$30,237 .51  
Events and Sales: \$7,879 .00  
*Total Revenue: \$106,748 .91*

11. Sources besides website:

-Besides information obtained from the website, all information was provided by Amy Crank, Sprouts program coordinator for GMFTS ([acrank@gmts.org](mailto:acrank@gmts.org)).

**[BP 12]**

**[Community Food Education<School Food Education and Farm to School  
(by Public School System)<Baltimore City Schools and Great Kids Farm]**

1. Best practice in: School Food Education, Farm to School, and Urban Farming

2. Name of organization and website: Great Kids Farm,  
(<http://www.greatkidsfarm.org/>) and Baltimore City Schools' Food and Nutrition  
Services Department  
(<http://www.baltimorecityschools.org/2167103171652780/site/default.asp>)

3. Location and site: Catonsville, MD. Farm is 33 acres, and has several  
greenhouses.

4. Ownership and Operation: Baltimore City Schools operates the farm and is  
partnered with several non-profits.

5. Stated Mission: From Great Kids Farm's website, "Great Kids Farm provides  
opportunities for Baltimore City school students to understand and participate in  
every aspect of food preparation - from seed to fork - and prepares them to lead  
21st century sustainability efforts."

6. Baltimore City Schools Food and Nutrition Services:  
Great Kids Farm is one of many initiatives led by Anthony Geraci, Baltimore City  
Schools' Director of Food and Nutrition Services since 2008, all aimed at improving  
students' eating habits by upgrading the quality, and nutritional content of school  
food, as well as educating kids about food-related topics. Great Kids serves an  
"incubator" for school gardens, which have been sprouting up in city schools  
everywhere since he took his position. There are now about 30 Baltimore city  
schools with gardens, according to a recent Baltimore Sun article  
([http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2010-07-12/news/bs-ed-food-czar-  
20100712\\_1\\_mr-geraci-food-reform-tony-geraci](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2010-07-12/news/bs-ed-food-czar-20100712_1_mr-geraci-food-reform-tony-geraci)). 74% of Baltimore City's 83,000  
students qualify for free or reduced lunch, according to a Washington Post article.

Upon entering, Geraci has reformed school meals and food education, starting by  
**buying local**, writing the first request for proposal in Maryland history that called  
for only Maryland-grown produce to be purchased by the school district. "Geraci  
dropped long-standing purchasing contracts for U.S. Department of Agriculture  
commodities, such as canned peaches drowned in syrup, and started buying fresh  
fruits and vegetables -- 430,000 pounds last year, all Maryland grown"  
(<http://www.edutopia.org/green-schools-food-service-environment>). As of March,  
the department had spent \$1.3 million on local produce in the 2009-2010 academic  
year. The department's annual total budget is \$35 million. Great Kids Farm was a  
natural extension of Geraci's ambitions.

7. Great Kids Farm - What they do:

*Great Kids works in three areas:* 1. Educating kids about growing food and about how the food they eat affects their health through: field trips and service learning, schoolyard gardens and food education, and “global connections,” through a partnership with the non-profit “Growing Connections.”

Great Kids Farm also offers advanced learning programs (in environmental science, horticulture, natural resource management, and agriculture) and vocational training for older students, as it is becoming an official site of the City Schools’ Learning to Work program.

2. “Raising farm to fork awareness” by reaching out to the Baltimore community and welcoming other schools and volunteers to visit the farm.

3. “Harvesting for the community” by selling their food through CSA shares, farmers markets, and to area restaurants that are committed to buying local.

#### 8. Great Kids Restaurants

Geraci is also opening three Great Kids Restaurants that serve healthy food, using ingredients from Great Kids Farm and other local farms. “It’s [the kids’] business. They cook, they plan, they source. They use the Great Kids Farm as a product source. Our little chickens lay our eggs that make our omelettes that they sell in the café... It’s all integrated into curricula. It’s all about teaching green, sustainable food systems but also teaching entrepreneurial experience. It’s one thing to teach a kid about all this stuff, but it’s also important to teach them that there are careers out there that are directly linked to this,” said Geraci ([http://food.change.org/blog/view/food\\_files\\_tony\\_geraci\\_on\\_local\\_school\\_lunches](http://food.change.org/blog/view/food_files_tony_geraci_on_local_school_lunches))

#### 9. Resources used (besides websites):

[http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2010-07-12/news/bs-ed-food-czar-20100712\\_1\\_mr-geraci-food-reform-tony-geraci](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2010-07-12/news/bs-ed-food-czar-20100712_1_mr-geraci-food-reform-tony-geraci)

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/05/AR2009050500876\\_2.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/05/AR2009050500876_2.html)

[http://food.change.org/blog/view/food\\_files\\_tony\\_geraci\\_on\\_local\\_school\\_lunches](http://food.change.org/blog/view/food_files_tony_geraci_on_local_school_lunches)

**Woody Woodruff**  
**Executive Director & Founder, Red Wiggler Farm**  
**July 23, 2010 and August 11, 2010**

**Contact info:** Email: [woody@redwiggler.org](mailto:woody@redwiggler.org)  
Mailing Address: Red Wiggler Community Farm  
23400 Ridge Road  
Germantown, MD 20876  
Phone: 301-802-2386  
[www.redwiggler.org](http://www.redwiggler.org)

***Red Wiggler in a nutshell:*** “Founded in 1996 as a non-profit horticulture therapy and vocational program for adults with developmental disabilities.”

***Background/history, about the farm:***

- 15 disabled on staff
- Used to have bus line (ride on) but got cut
- On border of Ag Reserve but not in it.
- But land is still protected: Parks gives 20-year lease for \$1
- Had WSSC (city water) but no sewers/infrastructure; had to pay for septic system
- Ovid Hazen Wells Park: 290 acres; Parks got property in 1981
- People have voted for using it for different purposes over the years
- Watkins historic store from 1851; (Watkins Hub—proposed, but not selected, site from P&P)
- Loafing sheds: where cattle loaf

***Size of Red Wiggler:*** 12-acre farm; 7 with deer fencing (although they sometimes get in through fencing during winter)

***Comments and suggestions regarding the proposed farm incubator:***

***Irrigation:***

- Red Wiggler uses drip irrigation from WSSC
- Given the Hubs identified by Parks as sites for the farm incubator (which don't have WSSC), drilling a well would be a good method of irrigation. Budget \$30,000 for well (\$20,000 plus planning—need to hire a project manager...eventually may need to build more wells—incremental increases given changing demand, etc.)
- Need shed to cover equipment; use barn (tin) roof to catch rainwater and cistern to store

***Land:***

- Contiguous horse trails on Reserve—benefits: agritourism and using the manure for fertilization.

- Owning the land would be very helpful.

*Housing:*

- Should be available for long-term but not completely necessary immediately. The incubator could be treated as an extension of community gardens initially.

*Woody:* It takes a lot of work to start a farm. “I couldn’t do it again”

- link existing for-profit farms
- idealist.org: find young aspiring farm manager to enter incubator.

*Financials:*

- Staff/jobs: Woody has 3 full-time paid employees: Farm/field manager, office development, bookkeeper; also many unpaid volunteers
- Important question: how much will it cost to make it functional?
- Woody’s annual budget is a good starting point for the incubator: look at Woody’s budget.

*Red Wiggler’s plans for future:*

- Planning a greenhouse, 80% funded by foundation grant (\$400,000)
- Farm to school: right now MCPS builds “warming kitchens” to heat up pre-processed food

*Organic farming:*

- Standards aren’t THAT tough, but farmers need to be encouraged to go through with the process.
- Woody uses row cover to prevent insect damage to crops (squash beetles)
- Farmers and farms should all be working towards USDA Organic Certification for a variety of reasons: It presents a codified prescription for what can and can’t be done, it is clear and concise marketing, it can provide the high quality record keeping that is essential for good farm management, and it provides clear metrics to show progress of the initiative.
- Garlic yield is down 70% this summer because of soil-borne disease.

*Suggestions for my further research:*

- Funding sources for the project

*Best practices:*

- Red Wiggler is a best practice
- Food Project in Lincoln, MA
- USDA’s Community Food Projects: see who they are funding and those are best practices.
- Organic farm economy in upstate NY: increase in NY Organic Certified farms from 294 in 2003 to 591 in 2009 on more than 100,000 acres!

**[INT 2] APPROVED Interview Notes**

**Caroline Taylor**  
**Executive Director, Montgomery Countryside Alliance (MCA)**  
**July 15, 2010**

**Dolores Milmo** (Audubon Naturalist), **Greg Glenn** [INT 4] and **Nick Wilson** (Rocklands Farm) were also part of the discussion.

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***Montgomery Countryside Alliance in a nutshell:*** Organization that advocates for conservation of the Ag Reserve, supports local farms, and educates about the benefits of local farming.

*A Tour of the Ag Reserve*

- Caroline: "Reserve has potential for dramatic increase in table crop production"

*Some of the farms:*

- Rickman farm (aka Woodstock farm) is proposed incubator site.
- Waverly farm has good business model and soil management.
- Willard and Jamison (Robert P Jamison) farms-have a different land management perspective.
- Sarah Nichols-produces 17,000 lbs of tomatoes per week for 1 acre.
- Tony Cohen (Button farms)- 40-year land lease from state.

*Sustainable farming vs. Industrial farming*

- Commodity farmers make about \$3,000 per acre while diversified/organic famers can make 3-4 times that amount.
- Commodity crops require less irrigation.

*Town of Poolesville*

- Has potential to be a vibrant food hub with commercial kitchen and restaurant, etc. using local food.
- Poolesville H.S. already offers a global ecology program.
- The golf course clubhouse could be a good site for Through the Kitchen Door or another kitchen.

*Poplar Spring animal sanctuary: 430 acres, incorporated as 501(c)(3)*

- Great educational tool for Ag Reserve: tourism, people can gain experience working with animals.

- The potential *tourist* appeal of the Ag Reserve as a whole should not be neglected.
- Farm animal rescue, humane education, wildlife preservation

*What if there were no Reserve?*

- Just look across the river and see Leisure world in Loudon County, VA (see Bruce's photographs)

*Heroes of the land preservation movement:*

- Royce Hanson's work in responsible growth: Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) and moderately priced dwelling units (MPDUs).
- Mike Rubin—Founding Chairman of Board of Montgomery Countryside Alliance (MCA); buys up land in the Reserve to preserve open spaces and agriculture.
- Peg Coleman is known not only as a tireless champion for the Agricultural Reserve, but as an author whose books educate and inform us all about early life in Montgomery County.
- Woody Woodruff, Red Wiggler Farm
- Dolores Milmoie, Audobon Naturalist

*Best practices:*

- Look at Rodale Institute for best practices.



**[INT 3] APPROVED Interview Notes**  
**Jeremy Criss**  
**Agricultural Services Manager, Montgomery County Department of Economic**  
**Development (DED)**  
**August 11, 2010**

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**Agricultural Services in a nutshell:** *A division of the Department of Economic Development that assists Montgomery County farmers in making sound business decisions, including participation in agricultural land preservation programs.*

*Other offices in the same building:*

- Montgomery Soil Conservation District: educates and assists landowners implementing soil conservation practices and techniques.
- University of Maryland Extension: Community education, including field days—teaches farmers how to use new technologies
- Farm Service Agency: provides farmers financial assistance, helps farmers meet federal requirements for soil, water, etc. in order to be eligible to receive funding via the Farm Bill (renewed every 5 years).

*Farming in the Reserve:*

- Water/irrigation concern: City water/sewage envelope doesn't exist in the Ag Reserve.
- Drip irrigation--drill wells (Jeremy's estimated cost: about \$1500 to \$5000); or use pond storage (NRCS approved would cost \$25,000 to \$75,000).
- Farmers could benefit from technical assistance.
- Some crops will be impossible to irrigate (e.g. sweet corn). This crop requires broadcast irrigation as is done on the Eastern Shore, but this isn't feasible in MC/in the Reserve because the land isn't flat. Thus, these crops will be entirely dependent on rainfall for a water source, and may not be a wise choice.
- Growing season: short for table food growers; would need to invest in high tunnels and greenhouses to extend the growing season. Zoning restrictions would need to change in order for this to happen in the Reserve.

*Slaughter facility:* Much needed in Montgomery County but would require special exception to zoning ordinance to implement.

-USDA mobile slaughter unit is an option

*Organic farming in Montgomery County:*

- There are currently 6 farms that are certified, covering fewer than 100 acres.
- A number of farms follow organic principles but aren't certified because certification, which is done through the MD Department of Agriculture (MDA), is a three year process that costs the farmer hundreds of dollars. [This process could be an area in which farmers could benefit from assistance.]
- Pest control is another issue- Woody Woodruff uses row cover. Red Wiggler Farm garlic production down 70% this year due to insects.
- Non-agricultural uses of fertilizers (e.g. lawn service, which uses fertilizers ten times as intensively as agriculture) are about equal to agricultural uses and agricultural uses enhance productivity.

*Local marketing:*

- "Pride of Montgomery County Agricultural Products" logo stickers and metal signs available to promote local agriculture. Farmers that grow in MC can use to display at their on-farm markets or at farmer's markets.

*Butler's Orchard:*

- Pick your own, farm market
- "Agritourism"—slides and playground on farm premises to entice visitors, especially families.
- Mobile trailer and a house used to house two families of seasonal farm workers (H2A).

*Lewis Orchard:*

- Largest wholesale producer in County; 190 acres as base operation and another 300 acres rented farmland

*Dealing with red tape:*

- Farmers want an agriculture advocate within the Dept of Permitting Services to help them deal with red tape. Farmers must be well informed about what they need to do in order for this to be effective, as the representative can only assist in areas that the farmers ask him/her to.
- Provide help with obtaining license for on-farm food processing.

*Land Leasing:*

- Park & Planning owns about 89,000 acres in Montgomery County; they have reduced the land they lease to farmers drastically over the years. Declined from 8,000 acres some years ago to 1,500 acres now.
- Need to provide incentives for land owners (and get P & P to do the same) to give long-term leases at a reduced rate for farmers. Due to recent legislation (Executive regulation 3-09AM; see Ag Services website for final document) there is now a system in place to reward long-term leases for farmers that wish to implement creative methods of sustainable food production. Jeremy would support an initiative to assist (subsidize) table food farmers in obtaining land or make it more desirable for landowners to lease to table food farmers as long as existing farmers were also eligible to receive some compensation

*Food processing/“Food Innovation Center” (Culinary job training program plus Commercial Kitchen Incubator and/or Central Kitchen):*

- Churches and Schools are the only places with commercial kitchens in the Reserve—Churches are allowed to be anywhere by zoning law.
- Make it easier for commercial kitchens to exist and process food to add value.
- Should include many operations (e.g. canning beans and fruit, producing sauces, jelly/jam, freezing/packaging, etc.) and should be used as a way to make local food available during winter.

*On-farm processing restrictions:*

- County Health & Human Services charges \$25 to farmers (\$175 for non-farmers) for license to process food for sale at farmers markets, on-farm markets, and roadside vendors. The person must also enroll with DED. This can be a pretty difficult process. There are currently about 50 farmers registered with DED but this includes vendors at markets, so not all 50 have on-farm processing licenses. (check with Jeremy for exact number)
- For food processors to sell to retailers (i.e. grocery stores), they must go through a difficult and expensive training and testing process to obtain a permit from the State’s Dept. of Mental Health and Hygiene.

*Institutional Buying:*

- MCPS: Procurement barriers: annual bid goes to a single supplier in order to centralize the process; currently Lancaster Foods, a wholesale distributor in Jessup, MD [INT 20]
- Jeremy: “No more than 15% of food purchased by MCPS can come from outside sources. This needs to change if buying from local sources is going to be possible.”

**[INT 4] APPROVED Interview Notes**  
**Greg Glenn, Farm Manager, Rocklands Farm**  
**July 15 and August 17, 2010**

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Rocklands Farm

14525 Montevideo Rd.

Poolesville, MD 20837

***Rocklands Farm in a nutshell:*** started in February 2010 by three friends with an interest in quality locally produced food and in creating “know your farmer” sales.

*Economic development of the farm:*

- Sales via farmers market, CSA, U-pick and farm stand.
- Unmet demand for local sellers; not many sellers in the area that are truly local (within 30 min drive); this set Greg’s farm apart as it’s 25 miles from Washington, DC
- 35 acres; 4 acres of produce—berries, vegetables
- Diversification is beneficial for reducing risk and is better for the earth
- Greg wants to expand into meat production: wants to get hogs, more cattle and poultry.
- The farm has not slaughtered any cattle to sell beef yet.
- Berries provide a good connection for marketing.
- Greg: “Not hard to get your name out [as a new farm]”
- Making the farm/the Reserve a fun place for people to visit: hiking trails, etc.
- Rocklands farm is open 3 days a week (usually Fri, Sat, and Tues, depending on how ripe the berries are) for people to visit and pick their own.

*Water:*

- Large monoculture farms use large overhead sprinkler systems: very water-intensive.
- Methods for conserving water:
  - Drip irrigation.
  - Working on well.
- Farm pond: pump water out when needed.
- Groundwater supply is decent in MD.
- If they scale up, they’ll use wells.
- Amount of water used depends on the crop (e.g. squash doesn’t use much water).

### *Innovation in sustainable farming methods:*

-Portable chicken coop: using manure as an asset by recycling it...

### *Challenges:*

- Understaffed; could definitely benefit from more labor; Ben Allnutt (Homestead Farms) and Wade Butler have workers that live on-site during growing season, and then go home, presumably to their native countries in Mexico and Central America.
- Not enough time to collect data, etc.
- Scale: can't produce enough to meet customer demands; they sell out quickly at the farmers market.
- Marketing: large diversity of customers at different farmers' markets; it would be great if they could sell at all the markets and extend their farm's market/customer base.

### *Housing vs. Transportation for Farm Workers*

- Housing on-site could help: odd hours and long hours.
- Other option: have core crew of workers live there, and others commute
- Zoning law contemplates tenant housing (rental)—it is alright, but would have to be regulated.

### *Day laborer transportation*

- Connecting CASA with farm workers is a good idea, and driving them to the farm would work fine as long as there is a regular group of workers that the farm owners/managers are familiar with, and there aren't new faces each day.
- Woody Woodruff uses vans to bring his workers Meat slaughter & processing

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### *Meat Production*

- USDA certified slaughterhouse in Mt. Airy; cut meat off bones; could get bones from them for making stock.
- Should hang meat for longer to enhance flavor (about 21 days).
- \$60/head for slaughter, \$0.55/lb. for slaughter and packaging.
- Regulations for slaughtering are greater than for processing, packaging and freezing.
- Transportation is costly for farmers. Need more local meat slaughtering facilities.
- Complications with mobile slaughter units: everyone wants to slaughter at the same time; cost (\$60,000 to \$100,000).
- Ideally farms would be able to process meat on the farm, and a local slaughterhouse would kill and clean the animal.

### *Food Hub*

- Concerns: maintaining farm identity.

- Rocklands could sell their lower-tier produce that would otherwise get composted.
- About 50% of their produce falls in this category ("seconds"). About 75% of seconds could be used for food (sold to Food Innovation Center for processing). Typical farmers: 30-50% goes to waste, less for farmers that sell to CSA (more like 20-35%).

**[INT 5] APPROVED Interview Notes**

**Anthony (Tony) Cohen, Executive Director, Menare Foundation,  
and Steve Gillick, Farm Manager, Button Farm Living History Center**

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Germantown, MD 20874

Phone: 301-916-7090

Website: <http://www.menare.org/>

***The Menare Foundation/Button Farm in a nutshell:*** From their website, "*The Menare Foundation, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of Underground Railroad history, historic sites and environments and to the creation of associated educational programs...The Historic Button Farm is set on 60-pristine acres inside Seneca Creek State Park, and is Maryland's only living history center depicting 19th century slave plantation life.*"

***More about Button Farm:***

- -Located on state land, lease for \$1 a year. In exchange, they renovate buildings.
- -Setting up living history center, a "hands-on museum." Farming is an offshoot of those objectives. They sell food through a CSA: Manna buys 5 shares, plus 12 other shares sold (17 full CSA shares).
- -3 years of experience; they need help, but they could also help the new farmers because they have experience getting started as a small farm.
- -Only nonprofit in County's "green" business incubator, *Bethesda Green*, (Dave Feldman). Helps with business development, hooks them up with community resources. County offers low/no interest loans for green companies to attract/grow the green economy; making connections with people.

***Areas in which Button could use help and what the farm incubator should address***

- -Networking, shared equipment, data collecting, etc.
- -Want to become organically certified
- -Have access to INFORMATION: They want to know what they SHOULD DO.

- -Must file nutrient management plan under state law if you make a certain amount of money. Incubator could help out farmers with that.
- -Paper work and business side: Steve doesn't have time to work on business plan for the farm. Needs more labor to free him up. Could definitely benefit from expert advice in writing a business plan. Could even benefit from just an off-season business plan seminar/course.
- -Button could offer a place for training for incubator: Apprentice program for unpaid farmers. Also could host off-season conferences for all the farmers.
- -Classification for "small farm" that would allow certain farms to qualify (for a small farm network); even if not on-site; there could be a small membership fee (sliding scale based on profit or revenue, etc) to get access to training and seminars and equipment rental.
- -If Park & Planning sets aside land, it could be autonomous, but an extension of County government. Have government talk to government (County and State). Using County land has many benefits.

### *Sustainability*

- -#1 polluter of Chesapeake Bay is agriculture
- -they have good green infrastructure that they'd like to promote
- -right near Seneca Creek; downwind from Dickerson Power Plant (worst polluting power plant in USA).
- -**Recommendation: Help farmers find grant opportunities:** need it to dig a well, do drip irrigation, have solar: they would ideally like to have community partners without having to write grant. So the Sustainable Farm Network could provide that service: obtain the grant and use it to help multiple farms

### *Composting*

- -Growing SOUL (*Jessica Weiss [INT 26]*) partnership: trying to set up composting program. If they get scrap foods from Manna, it can be composted.
- -Composting bins on the farm. Jessica will manage them—takes compost from whole foods, etc. She needs land to use; *they could greatly benefit from buying cheap compost.*
- -Composting to loosen up the soil, huge boost in productivity.
- -MCPS should get involved. At Woodstock Park, could take mulch down the road, and dump wood chips. MCPS could deliver compostables from lunches.

### *Farm Labor*

- -They get volunteers: SSL hours, etc.
- -Would rather have regular faces: would like workers...want steady part-time or full-time workers; would have to be low wage
- -Staff: all volunteers, unpaid. They need to sell more to hire more workers.
- -Building could accommodate two additional workers to live there.
- -Partner businesses and resources with farms: they have Eagle Scouts work there; free labor source to help them do stuff like setting up deer fencing, etc.
- -Idea: "crop mobbing" in the DC area

#### *Irrigation:*

- -None right now. Just bring barrels of water over by hand. Hoping to drill a well when funding is available.

#### *Five year plan*

- -Processing foods, but they need more information and help.
- -Marketing: want a farm stand in addition to CSA;
- -coming up with budget.
- -want to build additional facilities: mobile classrooms.
- -get public onto farms to see it themselves; “agritourism”, “agritainment”; bring kids there for events, etc.

#### *Land/Site*

- -Small demo garden (.1 acres)
- -17 acre field;  $\frac{1}{4}$  is used, in deer fencing: would love to expand, but need food sales to fund that.
- -4 acres of fenced farmland. About  $\frac{1}{5}$  is being farmed

#### *Equipment:*

- -John Deere riding mower
- -category zero tractor: very small tractor, but it does the job.
- -looking for plow on craigslist.
- -Received donated rototiller.
- -Farm equipment with any scale to it requires larger attachments. Rental companies that would have these things no longer supply these.
- -Would love to have an equipment rental service to just use stuff like tractor (although eventually they want go no till).
- -Idea for **equipment sharing**: “Master farmer” works with people on-site at Woodstock; a hired farm manager to train new incubator farms. Once the trainees know how to use the tractor, they could be hired for jobs on small farms; for members of the small farm network. Also could provide jobs for immigrant workers with tractors, etc. for small farms.
- -Funding for the tractor: \$30-40k (lowball); County owns tons of farming equipment—manage roadways. A few yrs ago, County was talking about using goats and sheep to get rid of weeds along I-270. In March, there’s no grass that needs to be cut along 270. Could rent this equipment to small farms.

#### *Grant:*

- University of Washington (DC) (Land Grant University) chosen as subcontractor for school project. \$60,000 for two years—starting 2 school-based gardens in DC.

#### *Best practices:*

- -Wedge in Madison, WI—small-scale growers co-op
- -Harvest Kitchen CSA plus Kitchen option—Ann Arbor, MI



- -WWOOF: people working on organic farms; New Zealand apprenticeship program.
- -ECO in Beltsville. Orgs must be able to stand on their own two feet
- -Greenhouse in Howard County: paying them to grow there

**[INT 6] APPROVED Interview Notes**  
**Department of Economic Development (DED) Meeting**  
**Jeremy Criss, Ag Services Manager, DED,**  
**John Korpela, Director, Montgomery County Business Innovation Network,**  
**DED, Tina Benjamin, Chief of Staff of DED and member of Sustainability**  
**Working Group**  
**July 7, 2010**

**Contact Info: Jeremy Criss**  
 (see [INT 3] for contact info)

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*Proposed Agricultural Incubator in Woodstock Equestrian Park ("Darby Hub")*

- Jeremy: water access is key concern; lots of water is required for growing table food. No access to public transportation also a challenge.
- Capital Improvement Project (CIP) amendment to Woodstock Equestrian Park Master Plan. *See Final draft of Master Plan.*

- Next steps: need an entrepreneur who can take on the project; need to structure the program to make it as financially self-sustaining as possible. Figure out nonprofits that can be brought in to help.

#### *Farming in the Ag Reserve*

- 1980 Master Plan for Ag Reserve; Zoning (1 dwelling unit/25 acres).
- Private Easement contracts can only be changed through court.
- Easements enforced to ensure enough food and fiber is produced: 70,000-75,000 acres out of the 93,000 acres in the Reserve are covered by easements. Bruce: But is all this land being actively farmed? Low standard for what is considered “active farming.” See Ag Census.
- Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) vs. publicly funded easements: easements are more restrictive.
- See Ag Services website:  
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agstmpl.asp?url=/content/ded/agservices/index.asp>
- See: Sustainability Working Group (SWG) Report; Land Use Committee on GETF; “Rethinking Montgomery” roundtable.

#### *Farm Worker Housing in the Reserve*

- Butler’s Orchard has seasonal housing for two families of migrant workers, with a farm tenant-zoning permit.
- Parks can do what they want with their own land; Chapter 59 of Zoning text addresses the issue of accessory dwelling units.
- Could face opposition from “open spaces” activists.

#### *John Korpela on the County’s Business Incubator Network*

([www.mcinnovationnetwork.com](http://www.mcinnovationnetwork.com))

- Began 11 years ago; since then about 100 companies have graduated, creating about 2,000 jobs (before the financial crisis). There have been four “early terminations” (i.e. failures).
- Space leased to start-up companies and companies that are a few years old but are still struggling. Leased space is subsidized but not too much below market rates. But there are other benefits, such as shared equipment and space that lower overhead costs.
- 5 facilities (3 are full, 1 has a waiting list), about 150,000 sq. ft., more than 200 offices.
- Diverse assortment of companies; time that companies are allowed to stay in the incubator depends on the type of company.
- Training programs: from Accounting 101 to more specialized advice.
- Rent revenue doesn’t quite cover total costs: the County covers 30-40% of operating costs. Operating budget is \$3-3.2 million.
- Kitchen Incubators: people want to start commercial kitchen incubators: John has received calls from these people. They need business guidance though.

### *The market for local food*

- Demand for locally grown produce: how large is it really and where is it coming from? Demand for ethnic foods. Large wholesale food warehouses in Jessup, MD (e.g. Lancaster Produce, which sells to MCPS) get first pick on goods, ethnic stores get second pick. Can save 25% or so by buying at ethnic stores.
- Butler's and other County farmers can't compete with those prices.
- Much of the food is imported from Mexico and Central America.
- Market outlets: on-site farm market, CSA, farmers markets, roadside stands.
- Major buyers: schools, Whole Foods.

### **[INT 7] APPROVED Interview Notes**

**Gordon Clark**

**Project Director, Montgomery Victory Gardens**

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**Mailing Address:** Gordon Clark  
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Silver Spring, MD 20910

### ***Montgomery Victory Gardens in a nutshell:***

- Formed to help build a self-reliant sustainable local food system in Montgomery County.
- Works on multiple levels: individual, community food gardens, **school systems**, land use issues.
- Pretty good success in year 1: large and growing readership of weekly email update on local/sustainable food events and issues; created first County congregational garden network—donate to food banks/pantries.
- MCPS gardens advocating.

*Gordon: "Food is the easiest environmental movement to get people involved in because you can personally create change in your personal life and in the larger by growing your own"*

### ***Land use/lease policy in the County:***

- There are not enough farmers growing table food crops for local consumption. Many of the activities deemed "agricultural" in our county (such as horse farms and tree nurseries) do not pertain to growing food; of those that do, approximately 85% of farmers are commodity farmers.

- County is mostly just giving out 1 or 2 year leases designed for commodity farmers that use chemicals; table food growers need long-term leases to reduce the uncertainty and build their business. . Short-term leases are easier for the County than long-term leases because they don't have to act as managers or landlords. .
- See M-NCPPC's "Rethink Montgomery" panel on local food production: Gordon Clark, Jeremy Criss, Ben Allnut (Homestead), and Wade Butler (<http://www.montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda/2010/agenda20100422e.html>). Although Butler and Allnut have non-organic (and thus ultimately non-sustainable in Gordon's view) farms, he believes we should still support anyone who grows food locally. Question on how to balance support for competing farm businesses, since some existing ones may not want the competition. -Need low-cost land leasing for small organic farming producing table crops for local consumption. But prioritize it so you support sustainable/organic farmers. Also need to bring in local processing centers so other crops, such as milk, meat or grains, don't have to be shipped out of county for processing.
- Main obstacle is price of land; it's difficult for government officials to commit to supporting local farm development in face of more lucrative development.

#### *Increasing demand and Montgomery Victory Gardens' role*

- A massive and on-going public education campaign to stimulate demand for local and healthy food should be a priority. County Executive, County Council and other local government leaders should be involved in this.. Today, the vast majority of food consumed is non-local.
- As an advocacy group, Montgomery Victory Gardens aims to get people interested in food gardening and local food generally, and to organize campaigns to build this support.
- Getting people involved in their own food production is the single best way to get them to buy more local food.** Studies show that those who grow any amount of their own food also purchase more at farmers markets, and support local food generally.

#### *Schools*

- School gardens: part of the education. Teach kids at young age to increase demand.
- Ideally, kids learn to grow food and cook food and learn healthy eating habits, etc.
- MCPS must lift the ban** on school gardens.
- MCPS is the 16<sup>th</sup> largest school system in USA. \$2 billion budget; half of the County's budget.
- MCPS is also the largest food buyer in the County:** they serves 13 million meals annually: largest single purchaser of food in the County. Huge centralized system—huge central kitchen; individual schools just reheat the food. SCALE is the that prevents them (they believe) from buying food from local farmers.
- Best practice:* **Baltimore City Schools:** Tony Geraci

#### *Farmers specializing to meet wholesale demand*

- Pick one crop (e.g. spinach) and grow that in MC and have MCPS buy all their spinach locally.

*Best practices to look at*

- archived updates of Victory Gardens
- Alice Walker, many other schools across the country that allow or encourage school vegetable gardens

*More Farmers markets?*

- virtually no MC farmers markets' farmers come from MC.
- need to get both supply and demand; how many more farmers markets do we need? Don't start one if it will fail...

*Comments on the current national (and international) food system*

- Not run for small people; run for politically powerful corporations.
- Double cheeseburger is cheaper than broccoli because of federal policy **(such as subsidies for corn production, which is in turn fed to cows in Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs))**.
- NEED TO CHANGE THE FEDERAL POLICY TO HELP OUT THE SMALL ORGANIC SUSTAINABLE FARMERS.**

*Different economic models that support local sustainable agriculture:*

- What if specific communities in the county have their own designated farm? Have a local farmer provide food for that town, while the town in turn provides some labor (to educate more/young people on growing food) and guarantees the farms successful economic survival (so it's not all up to one farmer to make it on his own).
- CSA model on a macro scale where a farmer or several are attached to a town. CSAs are expensive: have a sliding scale. Middleman runs a weekly CSA (guy in Ohio)—people pay small amounts and he picks up the food and distributes.

**[INT 8] DRAFT Interview Notes**  
**Mitch Berliner**  
**Founder, Bethesda Central Farm Market**  
**August 1, 2010**

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Website: <http://www.bethesdacentralfarmmarket.com/>

***Bethesda Central Farm Market in a nutshell:*** *A farm market that takes place on Sundays and Thursday. Now in its second season, the market continues to grow. From the website, "Our goal is to grow into a pivotal place in the neighborhood that provides sustainable food, supports the environment, and gives back to the community by helping the hungry."*

*Farming in Montgomery County*

- Major problem: to buy land is so difficult, expensive.
- Example of how a young farmer makes a decision: Young farmer who has interned or trained for a couple of years wants to enter the business and run his/her own farm. He/she wants to work for 35 years and then retire. At the end of the day, if he/she does not *own the land* and can't sell it, he/she is not going to want to do it. The farmers who **own** the land (e.g. Lewis Orchard) are doing fine.
- Why are most of the farmers at MC farmers markets from out of county and out of state? Because the land is too expensive in MC.
- If land ownership is too difficult, then at least provide long-term leases at a very low rate (1\$/year even). If we want to get more farmers farming in Montgomery County, this is how.

*Farm Incubator*

- How much land will each person get? Implement a tiered system: if someone proves themselves on a couple acres, they can get more. For example, lease 20 acres for \$1/year.
- Will farmers be able to build houses on the property? They have to live there—farming isn't a 9-5 job. Dormitory housing is not good for couples. Get them a house.

- Some concerns with shared equipment.
- Look to market to institutions: contract farmers to grow for schools, prisons.

#### *Farmers Markets*

- Farmers markets don't make money. Run by government usually. Mitch started the market because he had already made money elsewhere. Pays landlord minimal amount. Farmers pay nominal fee (at most expensive market they pay 6% of sales).
- Farmers must be able to enter a farmers market.
- Need new markets—Montgomery County, unlike other counties, doesn't run many markets. Some non-profits run markets too. MC should do what Alexandria, VA and other counties do: put farmers markets on Parkland or in parking lots (e.g. Courts closed on Sunday, put a farmers market there).

### **[INT 9] DRAFT Interview Notes Tim Whitehouse Poolesville Farmers Market**

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Website: <http://www.poolesville.com/Farmers%27%20Market.html>

*Tim Whitehouse's interests:* Community and economic development, and local food. The Poolesville community wanted a farmers market. Upcounty residents have access to local farms, but there's a community aspect to a farmers market. They will feel they are supporting local businesses.

#### *Poolesville Farmers markets:*

- Town initiative; four markets this summer, on Friday evenings. Shortage of farmers: 2 or 3 local farmers, a cheese maker, miscellaneous others
- Big producers don't want to come. Small vendors could benefit. However, staffing is a problem for many smaller farms, making it difficult to sell at market and work on the farm [INT 4].
- Entertainment events

#### *Food Processing:*

- licensing for home kitchens: need home kitchen licensed as a commercial kitchen;
- people: Kathy Bubbs (on vacation after the 18<sup>th</sup>) knows people who might be interested in the kitchen incubator; or at least use help in getting their kitchen licensed.

#### *Future plans:*

- Move forward with more markets next year
- Two small grocers (Selby's; The Organic Market in Poolesville)  
—don't want to hurt their sales but want to offer another option.

*Costs:*

- Want to be self-sufficient with vendor fees.
- Start-up costs: Got authorization from town, which Tim believes cost under \$1,000.
- Minimal advertising/operating costs: four ads in local newspaper, posters, etc.
- Flat fees to farmers: \$5 for same zip code, more expensive for farmers from further away.

*Other towns' farmers markets:*

- Clarksburg (weekly); does flat fees; don't have a local food store and thus the farmers market isn't competing with existing businesses.

**[INT 10] APPROVED Interview Notes**

**Joyce Breiner**

**Co-Founder and Deputy Executive Director, Poolesville Green**

**July 30, 2010**

**Contact Info:** Email: jkbreiner@comcast.net

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*Climate Change Awareness Advocacy*

Nov 2007—became very interested in climate change and after researching it in depth, became very motivated to do something about it. She decided to act locally in Poolesville: Joyce made proposal in early 2009 for the Town Commissioners to establish practice and policy to routinely include sustainability, energy efficiency and other “green” initiatives in the conduct of town business and decision making processes. This proposal was accepted as one of four town priorities for 2009. As the town worked to establish an alternative energy ordinance (wind, solar, geothermal) where none existed prior, Joyce was active in providing testimony and information pertinent to the discussion.

*Co-Founding a new nonprofit: Poolesville Green*

- Mission is to promote individual efforts to “go green” and reduce one’s ecological footprint. Involves educational outreach opportunity for individuals and businesses to share ideas that work at the local level about things residents can do in their lives: energy efficiency, water conservation, etc.
- Could educate people about be about eating local and organic.
- Bethesda Green was an inspiration.

*Calleva.org*

- Camp with outdoor activities for kids, leadership activities, ecological education (they teach “leave no trace”), etc. Petitioning County to get exception so they can do overnight camp in Ag Reserve...

Is it a slippery slope to allow this? See Article in *The Monocacy Monocle*

*People/groups to talk to:*



- Selby's - the independent grocer in Poolesville
- Calleva - [www.calleva.org](http://www.calleva.org)
- Sugarloaf Citizen's Association - <http://www.sugarloafcitizens.org/>
- Organic Market & Holistic Center of Poolesville. They recently opened and have been establishing working relationships with local producers.  
([www.itsbetter4you.com](http://www.itsbetter4you.com)), 17710 Elgin Rd in Poolesville, MD 20837.
- Poolesville High School, Global Ecology Magnet Program contact:  
Joyce Bailey, 301-972-7936  
(<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/poolesvillehs/departments/global/index.html>)
- Local established farmers. For example: Lewis Orchards (on Rt 28 at Peachtree Rd) and Homestead Farms (on Sugarland Rd.)
- Tim Whitehouse: involved in organization of the farmers market in Poolesville

**[INT 11] APPROVED Interview Notes**  
**Ruppert Companies/Our House Meeting**  
**Donna Nichols, Controller, Ruppert Companies,**  
**Richard Bienvenue, Executive Director, Our House,**  
**Edwin Gould, Farm Manager, Our House**  
**June 21, 2010**

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**Richard Bienvenue's Contact info:**

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**Edwin Gould's Contact info:**

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Phone: (410) 730 2146

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[www.our-house.org](http://www.our-house.org)

**Ruppert Companies in a nutshell:** Divided into branches: Ruppert Landscape (includes nurseries and landscape construction/management), Ruppert Properties (commercial real estate), and Ruppert Ventures (capital and real estate investment). Ruppert Nurseries consists of four tree farms on over 500 acres.

*Ruppert's Workforce*

- All legal—need papers, use e-verify.
- Stable, some turnover at the hourly level

- 3 businesses in MC, about 100 laborers (including the corporate employees).
- People are standing in line waiting to work: no need to advertise for labor these days.
- Workers carpool to get to work by 6:15am each day.
- Job training: not many workers are brand new to the area, and they must have experience in landscaping for Ruppert to hire them.
- Field managers must speak English. Bilingual orientation.

*Our House in a nutshell:* From brochure: “A highly supervised and structured learning environment in a residential program which...serves at-risk adolescent males ages 16-20 year old who are in need of specialized help and a new start.” Students participate in a 40 hrs/week training program, and also work towards their GED. Our House also has a 4-acre organic farm for students to work on, including 10 beehives.

#### *Our House*

- 140 acres; 16 kids: average stay is one year.
- State reimburses 80% of tuition; Budget: \$950,000/year, plus \$150,000 raised on their own (mostly private donations).
- Carpenter training: 12 months/year.
- Kids come from all over MD; 2-4 usually from Montgomery County.
- State-licensed residential program is effective because kids are taken from their poor environments, but it is also challenging and expensive.
- Results: 80% “success” rate (i.e. transition to employment); 18% recidivism rate

#### *Our House’s Farm and Land*

- Ruppert stopped growing trees on the 60 acres; asking him to bring the trees off; weeds grow and they’re illegal; need to do something on that land, looking to turn it over for agricultural uses. Could be a great site for a farm incubator. Also need deer fencing.
- Abundant land for community farmers; drilling a well; also have a farm pond.
- They want to expand; the incubator would bring a lot of positive publicity to Our House.
- Two farmers on the 4-acre organic farm. Organic certification took less than three years to obtain.
- Also 30 acres (bought for \$1.5 million) for corn/soybeans, but want to shift to diverse crops.

#### *Edwin Gould’s Comments on “Imagine,” and the use of the word “organic”:*

- According to the law, if you say your food or farm is “organic,” you have to be certified organic or follow all the rules and regulations; any project of this magnitude would require a lot of oversight.

- 2 other programs that are alternatives to organic (NY and New England); ways to farm sustainably (following organic principles) without requiring the paperwork and the money [also see La Montanita's Beneficial Eco Label].
- Small supply of organic goods in this area.
- Integrated pest management (IPM): minimizes chemicals.

**[INT 12] APPROVED Interview Notes**  
**DEP Meeting with Dick Wegman, Chair of Green Economy Task Force (GETF)**  
**and Doug Weisburger, Senior Planning Specialist, Sustainability Programs,**  
**Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)**  
**July 16, 2010**

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Garvey Schubert & Barer

1000 Potomac Street NW

Washington, DC 20007-3592

**Doug Weisburger's Contact info:**

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Website:

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Mailing Address: 255 Rockville Pike, Suite 120

Rockville, MD 20850

*Bruce's overview/intro:*

- Day laborer center—are there lots of people unemployed there?
- Three different sites. In winter, 5/100 get jobs, now, 20/100 get jobs. People alternate for who gets jobs. Bring them in vans to reserve.
- Sally Rudney from Community Foundation: Find business leaders, as this issue needs an entrepreneurial mindset—bring it to them early, and let them get their minds in on it.

*Woodstock site for farm incubator:*

- Department of Economic Development (DED) [INT 6] had concerns that it was the wrong site because of distance from the distribution sites and water/irrigation concerns.
- Amount of land—127 acres is more than enough.
- Woody Woodruff [INT 1] should be a priority meeting— get his view on the appropriateness of the site.
- Although P&P picked the site, must amend Master Plan.

MC Climate Protection Plan (Recommendation F&A-11), Jan 2009; p.86-87: says high demand among MD residents for more locally produced food, and they are willing to pay a premium. Develop or tap into existing on line directory to connect landowners with individuals interested in growing fruits and veggies on that land. (See <http://www.sharedearth.com/>) Land could conceivably include backyards in the down County.

- 30/577 farms generate table food (a mere 5%).

*Other aspects of sustainable agricultural development:*

- Legislation to encourage small plots (e.g., Silver Spring's Charlie Koiner) down county (off the Reserve even): tax incentives, etc.
- Stimulate demand for local school systems, grocery markets. Add MOMs. (My Organic Market) to list of grocers.
- PG's "Eco" group: promoting organic agriculture.
- Don't leave out UMD: prospective training program. Steve Greenfield of Montgomery College receptive to providing training support (as they do for Green Business Certification Program and LEED AP).

*People to talk to (Doug Weisburger's contacts):*

- Scott Nash, CEO, My Organic Market, [scott@momsorganicmarket.com](mailto:scott@momsorganicmarket.com), (301)816.1133 x-123
- Cheryl Kollin, ckollin@verizon.net, MBA sustainability and agriculture; social enterprise [INT 27].
- Eric Seleznow, eseleznov@gwib.state.md.us, workforce development; 301-943-9768.
- Steve Greenfield, steve.greenfield@montgomerycollege.edu, Montgomery College Green Business Certification program.
- Kathleen Guinan, kguinan@crossway-community.org, head of Crossway Community Inc. in Kensington and has plans for zero waste community development and is new Wheaton/Kensington Chamber of Commerce Board Chair.
- Stephanie Oberle, stephanie.oberle@montgomeryparks.org, Director of Brookside Gardens [INT 14].

**[INT 13] APPROVED Interview Notes**  
**Peter James, Founder, First Fruits Village Aquaculture**

**July 30, 2010**

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Website: <http://www.firstfruitsfarms.com/>

***Peter James** spent the last 7 years studying the fruit and vegetable farming markets. Prior to that he helped develop the master production scheduler for McCormick's Shillings' Gilroy Foods processing plant and the company developed most of the management software for Demari Brothers, a \$250 billion tomato and orange grower.*

*Challenges of traditional agriculture in Maryland and Montgomery County*

- Currently Maryland imports about \$1 billion in table foods and produces \$90 million, quite a big trade gap.
- The fresh produce growers association has good market data (direct to consumer is very small percentage). The USDA published "food availability" data, which is useful to understand the food market.
- Montgomery County water wells produce a small fraction of the water that wells on the eastern shore produce, so any sizable vegetable produce using conventional farm methods is just not possible.
- The only sizable vegetable farm operations in MC are Lewis Orchard and Butler. Rock Hill is currently for sale in upper Montgomery County. They have 135 acres and produce about \$300,000 per year. The husband doesn't draw a salary and his wife draw about \$30,000 out of the business per year.
- There is currently a greenhouse building boom going on in Mexico.

*Organic and Local*

- Peter: "While the organic market still has legs, many large growers are filling that space. While locally grown food is currently a hot trend and is supported by market subsidies, the notion that new farmers will have a decent chance of becoming and maintaining viability is naïve in my opinion."

*Peter's commercial hydroponics project: First Fruits*

- Leased two acres on Brink Rd. in Germantown. Now clearing land.
- A significant aspect of the First Fruits Project is using renewable energy system to eliminate most fossil fuel use and cost. The 40% projected cost reduction goal is 20% labor and 20% energy cost. Building robots to automate things: automated seeder.
- Environmental and social impact: No need to use pesticides, zero nutrient runoff, consumes much less water. In addition to making local pesticide-free food production price-point market viable, the First Fruits Project seeks to derive enough profit to sustain at least a 10% level of giving to Manna Foods. Their goal is to develop a model system that can be placed in local neighborhoods where consumer can walk to buy their fresh produce. This would help traffic congestion and build community interactions.

People to talk to: **Paul Mock**—has successful hydroponic operation in Berkeley Springs, WV. His email is [info@mocksgreenhouse.com](mailto:info@mocksgreenhouse.com) and his website is <http://www.mocksgreenhouse.com/>.

**[INT 14] APPROVED Interview Notes**  
**Stephanie Oberle**  
**Director of Brookside Gardens**  
**July 30, 2010**

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Wheaton, MD 20902  
Website: <http://www.montgomeryparks.org/brookside/>

**Brookside Gardens in a nutshell:** From website, “Brookside Gardens is Montgomery County’s incomparable, award-winning 50-acre public display garden situated within Wheaton Regional Park. Included in the gardens are several distinct areas: Aquatic Garden, Azalea Garden, Butterfly Garden, Children’s Garden, Rose Garden, Japanese Style Garden, Trial Garden, Rain Garden and the Woodland Walk. The Formal Gardens areas include a Perennial Garden, Yew Garden, the Maple Terrace, and Fragrance Garden. Brookside Gardens also feature two conservatories for year-round enjoyment. A horticultural reference library is located in the airy Visitors Center. Admission is free.”  
*More About:*

- Horticultural display garden: a “living museum of plants”
  - Educational programming—cooking demos, lectures about sustainable practices and growing your own food.
  - In Wheaton; 2<sup>nd</sup> property in Bethesda; 3<sup>rd</sup> property in Damascus at Ovid Hazen Wells. (*Go to [Brookesidesgarden.org](http://Brookesidesgarden.org) and see the guide, published twice year.*)
- Food Production:*
- Not just an ornamental display garden, but **food production** at the Damascus site; it’s a farming community so they want to do a public/community garden in long term. Partnership with Woody Woodruff. Would love to see a farm incubator there.
  - Focus is on edible plants/foods; they held a February symposium “Green matters” on sustainable local food production; 3-year program pushing all these themes.

*People to talk to and resources to look at:*

- Samantha Lee, ECO Offshoots
- David Vismira ([david.vismira@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:david.vismira@montgomeryparks.org)) —in charge of Horticultural services division; working on Community Garden and schools; visited Intervale.
- Research by Fellows of the Longwood Graduate Program:  
[http://ag.udel.edu/longwoodgrad/Shari Edelson](http://ag.udel.edu/longwoodgrad/Shari_Edelson): The Farm and the Garden: CSA Programs and Public Horticulture Institutions (2010); Laura Aschenbeck: Homegrown Vegetables: Possibilities and Goals for Modern Public Gardens in an Age of Agricultural Disconnect (2011)...“Combat Boots to Cowboy Boots”—horticultural therapy for veterans.

P.S.: Brookside Gardens would be happy to provide an auditorium for the Fall meeting/symposium.

**[INT 15] DRAFT Interview Notes**  
**Dan Nachtigal**  
**President, Through the Kitchen Door (TTKD)**  
**July 27, 2010**

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**TTKD in a nutshell:** *TTKD is a non-profit organization that provides training in health, nutrition, and life skills to low-income and recent immigrant adults and teens, through hands on training in the kitchen. Trainees who complete their basic program are eligible for professional paid training in their self-sustaining non-profit catering business.*

*History of Through the Kitchen Door:*

- Founders Dan and his wife, Liesel started teaching cooking in Costa Rica where they were high-end caterers; taught people's maids to cook. Liesel designed a course. Course was accomplishing more than cooking—it was empowering people and changing their lives.
- Moved back to USA around 2000. Transitioned from selling their course via "retail" sale to "wholesale": TTKD would go to a non-profit and train their people at a fee. After one week course people started asking "what now"? This brought the idea of "Earning While Learning": teach people to sell food and run a catering business.
- Looking to separate catering and kitchen side.
- TTKD is transitioning from operating programs to training others to operate programs so they can replicate.

*Comments on the Food Innovation Center:*

- Name: "National" FIC or "Montgomery County" FIC? "National" may enable more funding but using local name would appeal more to MC folks.
- FIC is more about creating job opportunities for low-income people (not extreme poverty people). If you are too low income it is hard to start business.
- Women in particular (but everyone) are comfortable in the kitchen. Encourage people who want to change their lives by growing businesses; figure out who your clients will be, who you will target.
- Food Innovation Center could include a kitchen incubator plus a catering arm.



*Kitchen incubator idea:*

- About 23 model programs around the country. La Cocina (in San Francisco) in particular—motivated people who want to grow their businesses.
- Need a facility for such an incubator. If you are wholesaling, the facility can be anywhere.
- No opportunity for people to legally rent commercial kitchen space: we need that.
- More commercial oriented program for people who really want jobs; not so much life skills. TTKD provides that service.
- Have a test to prove competency; don't make it completely mandatory for people to take cooking class.
- Full service catering company like TTKD's can create jobs and then perhaps later they go off and start their own businesses.
- Poolesville Country Club: ideal site for a FIC kitchen incubator. Shared space and catering company and space for events. All you have to do is buy the building from the revenue authority. At La Cocina, they charge people \$15/hour for low-income people to rent space and \$50 for non low-income.
- Encourage local buying/buying from the farm incubator, but allow participants in the incubator to buy their ingredients from anywhere.

*Revenue sources:*

- Center would get income from rent from the catering branch. Center rents out space for parties.
- Co-op branding, get royalty from the people that become successful.
- No need for a restriction on when incubator businesses must leave. They will want to leave once they get going--the shared-use kitchen will not be an ideal facility.
- Outposts—one in Wheaton, etc. Tie the FIC together with Wheaton, an emerging food hub of MC with lots of ethnic diversity; a great retail outlet. Could have a retail food court. Food could be trucked collectively to Wheaton. Or put the whole FIC in Wheaton.
- Bring together the nonprofit community.
- Events: rent space for parties, weddings, etc. Parties make a lot of money. Make a rental deal (e.g. 10% of catering businesses sales go to FIC).
- The FIC would be a mission-based business; doesn't need much funding as it can support itself through revenue streams.

*Through the Kitchen door's involvement:*

- Dan could run the catering operation there. Manage part of the incubator possibly...exact role would be uncertain.

*Farm incubator:*

- Food processing restrictions are a huge problem for farmers in MC: ease restrictions so table food farmers can process on their farm.
- A problem with incubator for new farmers: how will they make enough money to buy their own land if they can't process food?

*Schools:*

- Need fresh produce in schools.

- School garden ban is ridiculous. MCPS Superintendent Jerry Weast is eliminating school gardens while DC is tearing up concrete to build gardens.
- FIC would need to get a foot on board. Don't worry about the schools, too much to worry about.
- Make County buy food from FIC

*Local/healthy food:*

- Look for people that are using local ingredients or selling locally. Have to be reasonable however--don't restrict it too much.
- Teach use of local foods and feature it in catering company, but let the entrepreneurs do what works for them.

*Comments on a "cookmobile" (mobile cooking classes) idea:*

- You can fit the equipment on the bus or truck, but will run into zoning/occupancy problems: In MC in a kitchen for teaching, you can have 1 person for every 100 sq. ft.
- Production kitchen, it's more like 1 person for 200 sq ft. Would need a tent that opens up to teach people outside, but bad weather could pose problems.
- Would be better as just one time workshops/seminars
- 

*Community outreach in eating healthy and local:*

- Roadside food stands near public places like libraries, food tastings (e.g. different types of apples), workshops, etc. Work Food Education into elementary/middle/high school curriculum in MCPS.
- TTKD can train 1000 kids/parents per year. Needs to be a priority if we want to transform the eating habits; need money though.
- Create an MC **Food Education Center** that goes to where people are. Training does not really have to deal with zoning issues; look at ways to get underutilized church kitchens; can't do food processing-not commercially licensed, but can do training. Food Education program would have a huge impact.
- Courses should be bilingual
- Funding: look to County, Community Foundation, corporate sponsor (Marriot, General Mills, Kellogg, etc.). If County Council just writes a \$100,000 check, then the Food Education Program can roll on it's own. It would be easy to implement: separate from incubator, utilizing existing kitchens (church kitchens near people's homes).
- Multi-meal cooking: cook on Saturday and freeze for the following week; reduce pain of cooking and increase pleasure; carbohydrates tend to be easier to cook.

*Other Best practices to look at:*

- Many different ways to approach this: Create jobs (DC central kitchen); support entrepreneurs (kitchen incubator model—La Cocina).
- Mothers/kids education and training (TTKD); health/obesity prevention (TTKD).

*How to generate income as a nonprofit:* Can give away curriculum for free but get money for participants and for training people to replicate the program. Snowball effect; problem is that people don't have money to start kitchen incubator programs. TTKD is also getting their curriculum fine-tuned.

*People to talk to:-* Norman Farm: Eris Norman 301-674-9929; [erisnorman@msn.com](mailto:erisnorman@msn.com)  
Farm Stand on Jones Mill Rd. and East-West Highway Chevy Chase, MD 20816.

-Niki Lewis: runs an organic store in Clarksville: stand alone store.

-MCPS

-Keith Miller of Revenue Authority: ask him about Poolesville golf course kitchen: since it is a kitchen can you do processing there? Or would we need to add a building for processing and redistribution?

-Chris Van Hollen's office

**[INT 16] DRAFT Interview Notes**  
**Sheila Crye**  
**Youth Culinary Educator, Young Chefs, Inc.**  
**July 28, 2010**

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young chefs, inc.  
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*Young Chefs today*

-Received grant from County (3<sup>rd</sup> year), main programs are at Sligo Middle School. 50% of students receive free or reduced lunch. After school cooking club is free of charge for the students, 12 students per session.

-3 days a week (1hr 15 minutes/each session). 2 tasty recipes each week. Each program 6 weeks long, culminating in a dinner party.

**-When kids cook, they are more likely to try new and diverse foods.**

-Classes use former home economics kitchen at the school that are no longer used for cooking. *Equipment* bought through state sale - buying excellent quality used cookware. Students in cooking club "buy" equipment by earning tasty bucks through good behavior.

-Sheila: *"There is a shortage of cooking classes."*

*International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP) ([www.iacp.com](http://www.iacp.com))*

-A very diverse association, covering a wide array of food-related topics.

-Includes a program in which chefs to adopt a school to make school food better.

-Offering phone conferences as a member benefit. (Non-members can access IACP facebook pages though.)

-31<sup>st</sup> Annual International Conference was held in Denver in 2009. One of the discussions was about "The Soul of Sustainability," featuring a keynote speaker (<http://www.iacp.com/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=668>) from Stone Barns Center (<http://www.stonebarnscenter.org/>), an agricultural learning center plus a fine dining restaurant, and a less expensive café in NY.

*Sheila's current project:* Online training course for kids—part distance learning, part partnership with cooking schools for hands-on learning. Eventually trainees could become teachers.

*Best Practices to look at: Stone Barns Center [BP 5, p. 45], Baltimore City Schools (Tony Geraci) [BP 12, p. 60]*

**[INT 17] APPROVED Interview Notes**

**Roger Egger  
President, DC Central Kitchen  
August 10, 2010**

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Mailing address: 425 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

***DC Central Kitchen in a nutshell:*** *A community kitchen involved in providing meals and counseling to the homeless, training low income residents in a Culinary Job Training program, and employing the graduates in a full-service catering company. 4,500 meals are produced each day using 3,000 pounds of recycled food, surplus from area food service businesses and farms.*

*What Egger proposed to Mayor's commission of nutrition:*

- Half of kitchen will be production for school and half for other institutions-in the middle there will be a classroom.
- Disincentives to buying local are numerous. MCPS gets a cut when they contract to a big company. Same thing with school vending machines.
- Consolidate local food production. *(Look at who gets contracts, and how many there are for different kinds of institutions that exist.)*
- Use incubator kitchen for starting new food service businesses - street vendors and restaurants too.

*Buying local:*

- DCCCK's "DIG" program: Directly Invest in Growers. DCCCK buys "seconds" from farms for 5 cents on the dollar. DCCCK is also buying for restaurants too now. Risk: restaurants might not want to buy seconds. Restaurants are also buying intermediate products from DCCCK like tomato sauce.
- Freeze produce to have it available year round. Also sell them after using the value-added products they use to make it with.
- Food process is what's missing. Bulk is cheaper; they might be buying pre-made.

- We have to grow specific crops. One thing to say lets feed our kids healthy food, but nobody is saying we want farmers to grow specifically these 10 crops. Make a formal agreement with farms: say we will buy it; work with NIH on a list of crops to grow to help old people's health ailments. "Not just a random hippie movement—this is business."
- DC Central Kitchen is the only one that buys.
- For profit catering program: Fresh Start. Purchases about \$25,000-30,000 worth of produce each year-none is rescued or donated.

#### *Senior Citizens:*

- 25% of MC population will be senior citizens. They will want fresh, healthy food. Meals on Wheels isn't enough. Find ways to feed the elderly.
- Intergenerational gardens: get the whole community together.
- Meals on Wheels does not use local produce.

#### *Other facts:*

- In WWII: Returning soldiers for first time in history did not go back to their farms. Women were liberated by saving time with frozen meals. Nobody thought that corporations would put profits above public health.
- Training program participants get a stipend. Fresh Start workers are paid. Thus, the time they spend in catering program must be a serious training program.
- DCCCK has 14,000 students volunteer each year.

#### *Innovation in Food Marketing:*

- Mobile marts in low-income neighborhoods. Provide farmers with an incentive to set up shop in poor neighborhoods. Guarantee farmers to sell X amount if they don't sell enough in the poor neighborhood (Co-op model).
- Trend in USA: kamikaze guerilla vans setting up roadside farm stands, tweeting where they will be and what they are selling.
- DCCCK's mobile food carts: idea was to have many of these. City put a moratorium on vendors. Rob wanted symbolism of a microloan cart in from of World Bank. Instead they wanted to put them in bad locations.

**[INT 18] APPROVED Interview Notes**  
**Alexander Stuart**  
**Entrepreneur, Founder of Take Stock**

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***“Take Stock” in a nutshell:*** From the Executive Summary, *“Take Stock was formed to offer natural and organic stock, soups, and sauces to people who are aware of the need for the real thing in the marketplace. As of now, if you want a real stock, you have to make it yourself. Baby boomers have driven the markets all their lives, and now they are interested in maximizing health and youthful feeling by eating organic and natural as much as possible. The other thing of interest is Food Network. This has demystified the process of cooking and now people print out recipes on line and take them to the market to buy fresh and natural ingredients. If they wanted to find stock the way it is taught in the first semester of any good cooking school, they wouldn’t be able to find it – until now. The reign of the so-called stocks, broths as substitutes, bouillon, and bases is over.”* **Email Alex for a copy of the full business plan for more information.**

***More on Take Stock:***

- Take Stock offers products that are very low sodium and have NO chemicals added or used as preservatives. Chemical laden imitation products now dominate the market.
- Stock is a base: used in everything, but big companies dominate with bullion and other substitutes. Stock is much more flavorful and full of protein than broth. It can be used as is for sauces or diluted with water 2:1 for soups or other thinner sauces.
- Those who know about cooking use white wine, red wine, sherry wine and cream in addition to water to mix with stock to make any number of soups and sauces.
- From the core products being made, you could make a whole line of products;

***Ingredients:***

- Bones are 8 cents/lb.
- Farm products that don’t sell, you cook: manage the produce and use it before it starts to go bad, always having fresh products for sale or distribution.
- [Food Hub can pick up produce from Manna and farmers’ “seconds” and food that doesn’t sell from farmers markets and farms.]

-Crops for farmers to grow: onions, carrots, celery, grey shallots, potatoes, berries, zucchini, squashes, turnips, parsnips, fresh herbs, string beans, broccoli, romaine, eggplant, tomatoes.

-*Marketing:* retail; institutional food providers (restaurants); and selling direct (internet & food network).

#### *Food for poor*

-St. Martin's and Shepherd's Table in Silver Spring are the only two outlets to feed the homeless in MC. They only feed a total of 100 people a day, which is nothing compared to the need. And St. Martins is closed for three months of the year. Alex wants to triple the amount of people served and do it all year round. The problem is that they rely on donations of cheap canned products with low nutritional value.

-Take Stock can provide some products for meals that are by-products of production of stock.

-Take Stock is designed to provide cash flow for the FIC and farmers as well as provide meals for the homeless and in recovery from a non-profit entity to be established.

#### *The production process*

-Stock is brought to a low temp and cooked for about 6 hours. Chill it, then fat comes to the top and stock is at bottom. (Ideally, working in a room that's 50 degrees.)

-The bones from the chicken operation will be made into stock immediately upon delivery and warehoused for sale or distribution in vacuum-sealed portion packages of several sizes.

#### *Packaging:*

-Mason jars or vacuum seal for fruits, veggies, jams, jellies, etc.

-For sampling, put stock in a box: no cans. Eventually, invest in vacuum sealing equipment: vacuum sealed and refrigerated products will last up to six months, and will be dated. These packages frozen can last up to four years.

-We can start with vacuum sealing equipment that is inexpensive and later can buy the more expensive commercial grade machines.

#### *Alex's potential role in the Food Innovation Center*

-He would like to manage the Processing Center, which, in addition to the Take Stock and donated meals production, would process all the farm products for sale and distribution. All products would be vacuum sealed.

#### *Equipment:*

-Take Stock requirements for the Processing Center are: four steam-jacketed kettles, one food processor, one chill blaster, one walk-in refrigerator, one walk-in freezer, two vacuum sealers, twenty proof boxes, two rolling racks, six miroil filter machines, six large hole china cap strainers, and six squeegees. East Coast Equipment in

Gaithersburg and Restaurant Depot can provide heavily discounted equipment and design work.

*Things to figure out:*

-Visit the organic chicken slaughterhouses and determine if we can get whole chickens that have been de-feathered and gutted and air chilled. Take Stock could then butcher them. This will not only save money, but it will allow us to manage the parts needed for the catering operation and which parts and frames we will need for Take Stock.

**[INT 19] APPROVED Interview Notes**  
**Marla R. Caplon**  
**Director of Division of Food and Nutrition Services, MCPS**  
**July 16, 2010**

**Contact Info:** Email: [Marla\\_R\\_Caplon@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Marla_R_Caplon@mcpsmd.org)  
Mailing Address: Food Service Office  
16644 Crabbs Branch Way  
Rockville, MD 20855  
Office: 301-840-8170

Website: [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/foodserv/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/foodserv/)

From website, ***"The mission of the Division of Food and Nutrition Services is to provide a variety of appealing, quality, nutritious meals in a cost effective and efficient operation. Dedicated employees empowered to promote success for every student serve meals in an innovative learning environment, respectful of each student's needs and differences."***

*MCPS meals nutrition*

- 30% fat, 10% saturated fat, etc.
- MCPS has fresh fruits and veggies at every meal at every school.
- Whole grains in pizza, dinner roll, etc.

*Procurement across the county*

- Must be an approved vendor; they could get approved; must go through procurement on the bid—buy off bid for trial period.
- To be accepted must be able to provide volume, high quality at an affordable price.
- Lancaster Produce (in Jessup, MD) is the current produce distributor; they sell fresh fruits and veggies to MCPS. Lancaster purchases from smaller farmers. Gets re-bid each year with two one-year extensions.

*Local food in schools*



- Farm to school week – local produce, Lancaster introduces MCPS to the farmers.
- MCPS spends about \$600,000 on produce each year.
- School food purchasing done in a bid system through procurement office.
- Cost-containment and food safety are also issues with MCPS food meals

#### *School gardens*

- Concerns that MCPS has about gardens: not sufficient land on schools, student allergies, and maintenance costs. What if next group of students/PTA group doesn't want to do this?
- Park & Planning has gardens; but it's difficult to get kids there because it is not on school property.

#### *Nutrition education*

- Cultural differences—Various define “what is appropriate weight” different
- Electives in secondary school include Health, Phys Ed., and Art., Cooking/Nutrition
- Health class: 6, 7, 8 grade; 1 semester in High School.
- Family and community partnerships (MCPS' version of OCP).

#### *People to talk to:*

- Kevin Jones: Kevin@lancasterfoods.org
- Laurie Jenkins: Supervisor for K-12 Outdoor and Environmental Education  
Laurie\_C\_Jenkins@mcpsmd.org. There is a garden at outdoor ed; she's an expert on gardens.
- Terri McCauley: Best contact for nutrition education curriculum  
Terri\_McCauley@mcpsmd.gov.
- School nutrition association journal: “Food research and action (FRAC)”  
contact: eteller@frac.org
- Larry A. Bowers, Chief Operating Officer for MCPS  
Carver Educational Services Center  
850 Hungerford Drive, Room 149  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Phone: 301-279-3626  
Fax: 301-279-3428
- UMD contact: Nancy Brennowitz Katz: nancyandrobkatz@gmail.com  
Diabetic program at UMD with interest in UMD's dining services; also ask her to connect with others.

#### *Best practices:*

- College campuses: look at bulk feeding for uncontained customer base (where students can eat anywhere)

**[INT 20] APPROVED Interview Notes**  
**Catherine Matthews**  
**Director, Upcounty Regional Services Center**  
**August 2, 2010**

**Contact Information:** Email: [Catherine.Matthews@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Catherine.Matthews@montgomerycountymd.gov)

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***Upcounty Regional Services Center in a nutshell:***

-The Upcounty Regional Services Center (URSC) is one of five such offices that represent county government in their respective geographic areas of the county, and that work broadly to engage the whole community and to keep the County Executive informed of their region. The URSC has a board of 20 members, and staff work closely with community leaders, municipalities, developers, nonprofit organizations, homeowners associations, and chambers of commerce.

***Planning:***

- There's currently a planning discussion about the potential conflict between contiguous urban and agricultural areas in Merced and Monterey Counties, California--"the edge problem." As we continue to urbanize as a county, we should take advantage of lessons learned in this situation. Here's a link to one such discussion,  
<http://californiaagriculture.ucanr.org/landingpage.cfm?article=ca.v064n03p121&fulltext=yes>

***Getting people to value the Reserve—Education:***

-Develop a campaign for educating our residents outside of the Ag Reserve. Many people still don't know where it is, what goes on there, and why it's of value to them.

-Catherine: "Several years ago, I suggested that an Ag Reserve advocate organization, Montgomery Countryside Alliance (MCA), meet with my advisory board and the board strongly recommended that MCA mount such a campaign starting with the other citizens advisory boards. I think this effort should be part of the early phases of this initiative."

*Community Involvement:*

-This initiative must involve the farming community as full partners at this very early stage in order to get their buy-in and support and not resistance. Ideally, the initiative should have come from the grassroots community so that the passion would already be there, relieving us of the need to persuade folks that this is a great idea for everyone. Since we, county government, have initiated the project, it will be our responsibility to engage others as equal partners and not just supporters.

-Also get the thoughts from non-farming residents of the Ag Reserve area: grocery markets, local garden plot owners, and businesses located in the Reserve. The vision should be flexible so that the community can help shape it along the way.

*Ecotourism:*

Is Ecotourism an option that should be explored? It can educate people about the land and different lifestyles, support fundraising efforts, and add another twist to our economic development efforts. On the other hand, it is also viewed as being detrimental to agricultural land by bringing the impacts of increased traffic, unappreciative visitors, and commercial interests that support tourist activities. We should still discuss it in order to come to a conclusion one way or the other.

*URSC's role with the Food Innovation Center:*

-helping to identify stakeholders, resources, and opportunities.  
-potentially identifying sites for different projects; getting feedback from people you normally wouldn't think of.

*Potential problems with the farm incubator site that Park and Planning selected:*

-Woodstock Equestrian site: remote—near Frederick County. Montgomery County residents might not relate—local community members might not go for it.  
-If the suggested site comes from the farming community, it may be received differently. Coming from the County government, it might not be received as well.

*People to talk to:*

-Callum Murray, Rural Areas Planner, MC Planning Dept.;  
-Tony Cohen, Menare Foundation, for a historical perspective of African-Americans and farming in the county;  
-Wade Butler, Butler Orchards;  
-George Lechliden, farmer  
-Jeremy Criss, Dept. of Economic Development for access to the Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board; can provide contact information for these other contacts

- Jim Clifford, Attorney
- Jean Arthur, regarding garden plots

*Catherine Matthews's Final Thoughts:*

1. Represent ALL the different perspectives.
2. "I think that everyone will see value in this project. It's how they define that value which may be in various ways. There are different ways to value the Reserve—we should look at all the opportunities. In addition, we shouldn't forget that the Reserve has been there for years, and we shouldn't ignore the people who have lived there for years."

**[INT 21] APPROVED Interview Notes**  
**Esther Bowring**  
**County Public Information Officer, Montgomery County**  
**July 22, 2010**

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Rockville, MD 20850

Website: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgtmpl.asp?url=/content/pio/site/home.asp>

*Esther's ideas and comments on the "Imagine" piece:*

- offer existing farmers the opportunity to participate or they will see it as competition: make the existing farmers a part of it/allow them to use the resources.

*Branding:* Professional-looking branding and marketing campaign. Make it something that all the participants in the incubator as well as existing farmers would be able to do—branding all the farmers on a single MC sustainable produce/food company name and label. Form a partnership with *Chamber of Commerce*: outreach to grocery stores, restaurants, etc. Chamber is huge partner in DEP's green business certification program; branding them as MC "green" businesses. Marketing to create additional demand. small farmers/specialty growers should work with restaurants; -emergency food providers elsewhere (even not in MC) besides Manna

*Public Information Office's potential role and marketing strategies:*

- Pub information office: provides media relations for County executive and "Beats" departments (depts. that people specialize in). PR and marketing
- getting the word out to the media via facebook, twitter, press conferences, cable TV, etc. Free and low cost ways to get information out—ride on buses, liquor stores, community centers, etc. (County gets space for free—only cost is printing)
- This project will require much more than that though. This will require creativity: corporate sponsor to pay for this outreach campaign; Schools—flyers that go home with kids on Day 1 (MCPS )

- Using social service agencies to get word out to low-income people.
- Pub Info office has: MC Cable TV channel; Spanish language show; special service announcements.
- non-English newspapers—Pub Info Office can help with that, they have access to those communities. Also use Karla, Lilly, Tim (Office of Community Partnerships staff) for community outreach.
- Spanish speaker in pub info office—provides outreach to Spanish media; could get a program on the radio: [Lorna.Virgili@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Lorna.Virgili@montgomerycountymd.gov)

*Other comments and recommendations:* Employers: have them do volunteer work: Marriott, etc. Talk to Bruce Adams about that. Also, Look into: what do existing farms in MC do to harvest the food? Legal vs. Illegal immigrants issue—find a good resource for this issue.

### **[INT 22] APPROVED Interview Notes**

**Alix Nunan**

**Engagement Coordinator, IMPACT Silver Spring**

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Silver Spring, MD 20910

Email: [alix@impactsilverspring.org](mailto:alix@impactsilverspring.org)

Website: <http://www.impactsilverspring.org/>

***IMPACT in a nutshell:*** From website, “*Our vision is a thriving, multicultural community where all people are engaged and have the power to bring about the changes they need to live a full and quality life. Our mission is to create the environments and capacity needed to build and sustain a thriving, multicultural community.*”

-*Events:* hold events on property, bring together members of the community.

#### *Neighborhood Opportunity Network:*

-Door-knocking campaign: go with two or three people, speaking different languages. Give info about network itself, try to engage them. Mostly hearing their story; collect data as they get to know them and figure out their background and what their issues are to see what the community’s demands are. Alix is in charge of data management. HHS campaign to connect people to services.

-provide info, also bring people together: Connecting people with each other and with services.

#### *Service Centers*

-staff is trained to help people find services. One in Gaithersburg.  
-started out doing neighbor exchange....

*Workforce program:* talk to underemployed/unemployed people.

-IMPACT could definitely help out with finding people to participate in farmer training and kitchen incubator program: work with economic empowerment staffer at IMPACT; working with people to build their home businesses.

-Contact: [Anh@impactsilverspring.org](mailto:Anh@impactsilverspring.org)

*Community garden in Gaithersburg:* Tim Warner (OCP) works with IMPACT.

*IMPACT's potential role in the MC Sustainable Community Food Initiative:*

-IMPACT can hand out printed materials at events. A representative from the Food Initiative could come out to the events to speak.

-Schools program, disseminate information and connect people with available services. Could also use door-knocking campaigns.

**[INT 23] APPROVED Interview Notes**

**Mark "Coach" Smallwood**

**Mid Atlantic Green Mission Specialist/Local Forager, Whole Foods**

**Contact info:** Mark.Smallwood@wholefoods.com

Mark "Coach" Smallwood

5515 Security Lane

Rockville, MD 20852

301-984-2024 office

410-370-7533 cell

***Coach's job in a nutshell:*** As Green Mission specialist he ensures that Whole Foods uses environmental best practices to minimize their ecological footprint. As Local Forager, he sources products, works with local producers (farms and value-added producers) to get their products into Whole Foods stores.

*Local marketing:*

- "Local" signs that say how far from the store it is produced. Identifies the farm, distance from farm. WF also holds demos in store to promote value-added products.

- There are currently no MC farms with products in Whole Foods stores. Most MC farms just sell direct to consumer.

*Becoming a new vendor with Whole Foods:*

- Thorough paperwork, insurance, farm/processing facility visits, processor visit are required. Coach has to see the animals, etc. For value-added producers: If one of the stores has to say they want your product, then you can get it other places if your product does well. Regulations/requirements for approval: HACCP; food handling classes...

- No size restrictions or minimum purchase requirements.

*Comments on the Food Hub idea:*

- The Food Hub would be a great idea. Producers can co-op on products, delivery, insurance, to reduce overhead costs. They would then just have to pay for one insurance under the Food Hub umbrella.

- Maintaining individual farm identity: farmers in co-op could pack their own goods and deliver it (or have it picked up) to the central warehouse. Whole Foods would label each farm's products separately so consumers know exactly where the food came from.

-“Food hubs”/co-ops that Whole Foods currently buys from: Tuscarora Organic Growers in PA (34 farmers in co-op, and 16 on trial). Jeff Taylor is the contact there. WF also buys from Green Field Farms in Ohio (100 Amish farmers).

*“Take Stock” (Real organic stock in a vacuum sealed package): are their products like that on the market now? -Chesapeake Gardens is similar.*

*Whole Foods 5% day:*

-Done 4 times a year; for nonprofits that fit the cause, they get 5% of the store’s sales for that day. The nonprofit comes in and support the cause; gets more people to come in and shop. They bag groceries.

*Work with Manna: Whole Foods bought (about 1800) CSA shares from Red Wiggler for*

**Manna. Whole Foods just supports the effort.**

**[INT 24] APPROVED Interview Notes**

**Kim Damion**

**Executive Director of Manna Food Center**

**July 29, 2010**

**Contact info:** Email: [Kim@MannaFood.org](mailto:Kim@MannaFood.org)

Website: [www.Mannafood.org](http://www.Mannafood.org)

Work number: 240-268-2524

Mailing Address: Kim Damion

Executive Director

Manna Food Center

9311 Gaither Road

Gaithersburg, MD 20877

***Manna in a nutshell:*** *Manna is a nonprofit dedicated to eliminating hunger in Montgomery County. Manna employs 15 staff members and thousands of volunteers. Manna feeds 3,300 families each month at fourteen locations throughout the County. Manna’s program produces no revenue.*

*Where does Manna get it’s food?*

-supermarket rescues; food drives; individuals that drop off donation; miscellaneous commercial providers (e.g. Pepsi); Mid-Atlantic gleaning: takes surplus food from grocery stores—problem is it has short shelf life;

TFAP (government subsidized—40% more during recession); also purchase food: 106,000 lbs (vs. 2.8 million lbs from collected sources)

-Farmer’s markets: part purchased, part donated (farmer’s also donate to Manna and bring “seconds” and stuff that they would not typically sell at a market, but very consumable for families in need.)

-Farmers Market Fresh Give-money was raised with a whole foods for 5% day; donation made it possible for Manna to purchase \$200 worth of produce per wk at area markets; gave list of staples that manna likes to receive to market manager (longer shelf life); they go to farmer’s markets;

-28,000 lbs. last year came from

-Farm shares: 12 farms (2 are orchards: Lewis and Butler); hired Woody Woodruff (small fee for first year) as project coordinator—Manna orders and buys on Friday, picks up on Tuesday from central location; Woody aggregates the CSA shares from the other 11 farms and gets all the food ready for Manna to pick it up.

-green top tomatoes

*Kim's comments on "Imagine", ideas, suggestions, concerns:*

-Farmers are planting a nice assortment but need plants that can be grown in bulk, grown more easily; these are the crops that Manna depends on.

-Use community resources: individuals and businesses and faith-based organizations, some government subsidies.

*Could Manna deliver "just fruits/vegetables" boxes?*

-Kim would be open to it, but why "only" fruits & veggies? Manna clients also need other food as well; currently have a truck for distributing food at satellite sites & apartment locations across Montgomery County.

-Challenges: don't get into a position where customers get to pick and choose. People won't take yellow squash if they don't know what to do with it; educate people about what's in season/what you are giving them... give them the "CSA share" and recipes/info for how to cook it. A "choose your own" model would work better for distributing to, say, senior citizens, but distribution would be too chaotic if the demographic that Manna serves were allowed to pick their own.

-teach people to can tomatoes or prepare fresh veggies to be used throughout the year

-Manna's old facility: distribution took place where warehouse was; more challenging – clients often would see something they wanted and our model does not support this. Boxes are prepared and distributed as is and not made to suit individual preferences other than vegetarian or diabetic boxes.

-Have a swap box for people to spend their own time managing the trading of different goods i.e. – if you do not like eggplant – leave in the swap box and trade it for something you prefer in there.

*Food stamps:*

-Very few people in MC qualify for food stamps—must be extremely poor to qualify; Manna uses *Self-sufficiency standards* of MC by Community Action Agency: analyze what it costs for a family of \_\_(size) \_\_ to live in MC; if they are living below this standard they need assistance; Train referring agencies on what these requirements are and those agencies do that leg work;

Clients are only at Manna for maybe 10 mins once a month (or less frequently for some); having a referral gives them a safety net—in case they need something else or don't qualify for Manna's food one month; if they don't have a referral they can still get emergency food box but Manna also gives them info on how to get referral for next time.

-Manna partners with other organizations to help educate clients ...e.g. Capital Areas food bank brought in to educate people on food stamps, Priority Partners offers insurance for low income families, WIC, etc.



*How Manna is addressing nutrition education:*

- Goal: establish education piece using volunteer staff to facilitate it; many companies have volunteered to give workshops, etc. Manna is looking to hire someone to coordinate the program.
- 4 basic groups: teens, seniors, special health (e.g. diabetes), and families
- Pull from existing clients and work with referring agency
- Classroom learning plus take-away pamphlets
- Staffer will figure out how often to have classes
- Challenge: getting clients to participate; also language barrier—50% are Spanish speakers.**
- Manna's education component could become a part of the Sustainable Community Food Initiative

*Manna's composting program, in partnership with Growing SOUL:*

- if it had a mother or came out of the ground you can compost it.
- Separate meat and vegetable containers; store on a raised pallet;
- work together with Growing SOUL: they come twice a week with truck and bring it out to farms (built 12 at Button Farms; also some others); overwhelming SOUL with the amount of food...a lot of bread
- Kim: "Talk to Jessica Weiss."

*How Kim sees Manna benefiting from/playing a role in the Initiative:*

- Manna would love to be a recipient and involved in the program.
- Good at distributing food to those who need it.
- If the two are partnered, funding will be easier.
- extension of food/health education component.
- Mobile distributor: but different from a pretty van.

*Community gardens:*

- Organizations (e.g. Churches, schools, synagogues) that want to have community gardens and donate the food to Manna--Manna hooks them up with master gardeners, composters, and other resources

*Kim's miscellaneous tips:*

- Have rules for regulating traffic flow in food distribution.
- Find ways to measure the impact ("capture results")—get data from everyone; volunteer work forces are great but would need to have a dedicated core force.
- Store produce properly to extend shelf life.

*People to talk to:*

- Niki Lewis [niki@greeneearthgoods.net](mailto:niki@greeneearthgoods.net); 240-686-0050;
- Jessica Weiss @ Growing SOUL; 301-537-7422;
- Whole Foods:** "Coach" –master gardener expert; [coach@wholefoods.com](mailto:coach@wholefoods.com)
- very helpful with community garden stuff.

**[INT 25] DRAFT Interview Notes**  
**Jessica Weiss**  
**Executive Director, Growing SOUL**

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Website: <http://growingsoul.org>  
Phone: 301-537-7422

***Growing SOUL in a nutshell:*** From website, “*Growing SOUL is dedicated to educating the public about the vital importance of eating locally grown food for the health of individuals, communities, and our planet. [They] teach a Zero-Waste food production cycle including production, preparation, storage, and composting, all while emphasizing the role of human interdependence in developing and maintaining a sustainable food system.*”

*Growing SOUL’s work today*

- “closing the cap”: everything that comes out of the soil should go back into the soil.
- create a community compost system. Started just by composting pre-consumer food waste; recently added scrape in bins for post-consumer scrap and doubled from 4 to 9 bins.
- Olney farmers market: collecting their good produce that they want to donate to the food bank. Every trash system has 3 bins: composting, garbage and recycling.
- Give out kitty litter buckets for composting at home.
- Giving out 5 bucket gallons to restaurants to collect compostable food waste: Riccutis was giving about 4 bins/wk=7 gallons of scrap a wk. Roots provided about 400 gallons organic scraps/ week. About 120 gallons
- Total amount per week: 800-1200lbs. of food collected for composting each week.

*Fact:* One can compost anything. It takes longer to compost the manufactured stuff, but it’s still doable.

*Community Partnerships*

- Manna: collect their food waste. Reduced their trash by 2.5 to 3 tons; Growing SOUL also collects donated food from Olney farmers market.

-Extended to two farms instead of just working at school: take scraps from Manna and make compost at Button for their soil. Also works with Spring Lake Farm.

*Future plans and projects in development:*

- right now, just composting
- building a geotensic tent with 30 foot diameter tent for growing year-round.
- Growing worms
- seeking grant for 4 by 4, tipping trailer, and a bobcat. Would also benefit from equipment sharing. \$25,000 for a used bobcat.
- diesel truck; collect oil from restaurants for biofuel.
- Aquaponics: nitrogen cycle
- Food press vision: teach people to cook affordably using cheap equipment--crock pots, immersion blender, etc.

*Colleges and MCPS: each bin costs \$10; need to expand*

*Incentives for people to participate in larger scale community composting operation:*

- if you're paying \$100 to make remove trash; cut the trash in half and pay SOUL 50\$
- Manna: has a bin where it costs the same no matter what.
- composting yard waste/trees: pay composting company to remove.
- ideally a municipal composting system would be developed.
- make it required by law to compost, as they did with recycling.

*Centralizing the operation:* have a collector in front of all the farms; at the grocery stores-Compost production isn't as much of an issue.

*Growing SOUL's role in the Food Innovation Center :* developing recipes to find most nutrient-rich foods for Manna; have farmers grow those foods

*Best practices:*

- San Francisco farmers market.

*People to talk to:*

- Niki of Green Earth Goods-niki@greeneearthgoods.net
- Rana at Bethesda Green-mailrana@yahoo.com
- Nadine Bloch-nbloch@igc.org
- Brenda Platt-bplatt@ilsr.org
- Coach of Whole Foods-Coach@wholefoods.com
- Will Allen—will@growingpower.org
- Vinny from ECO Offshoots: okrastar@gmail.com
- Margaret from ECO: frogwoman@mac.com

**[INT 26] APPROVED Interview Notes**  
**Rana Koll-Mandel**  
**Chairwoman, Sustainable Food and Agriculture Committee, Bethesda Green**  
**August 17, 2010**

**Contact info:** Email: [localfoodie@gmail.com](mailto:localfoodie@gmail.com)  
Phone: 240-498-4602 (cell)

***Bethesda Green in a nutshell:*** From their website: “Through the collaborative efforts of businesses, government and residents, Bethesda Green serves as a catalyst and trusted resource in building a dynamic model community for sustainable economic growth and living.”

*Local & sustainable agriculture*

- Huge imbalance between supply & demand: **supply is the shortage**. Provide incentive for farmers to produce more.
- Farm tours: let people know that MC could grow potentially.
- Farm to school program: Currently, it's only one week out of each school year and that's not enough. We need to assist farmers by helping to increase the demand for local food, but first we need to Grow More Farmers Before We Can Grow More Food in MC.
- Marketing: get word out to let people know what farmers are doing and why they should buy local; film festival (Food Inc., etc.). Education is key. Involve MCPS.
- According to MCPS figures from FY2010, almost 30% (29.25%) of kids enrolled in MCPS take free or reduced fee meals. Broken down: 31,383 take free meals and 10,081 take reduced cost meals.
- Federal dollars: USDA's farm payment system needs to be changed.
- Groups to look at: comfood.com; Canada, etc.—people working on local food; Food Corps: gardens/schools.

*Restaurants as a market*

- Would love to have to direct relationships with farmers to direct what they grow...
- Silver Diner—buys local food; farmers markets.

*Public-private partnerships*

- A great way to make these programs effective.

*People to contact:*

- Dave Heffernan, Director of Communications at Bethesda Green; can discuss Bethesda Green's "green" business incubator. Contact info: 240-396-2440 (office), ([dvheffernan@gmail.com](mailto:dvheffernan@gmail.com))
- Sara Ducey, Professor of Nutrition at Montgomery College ([sara.ducey@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:sara.ducey@montgomerycollege.edu))
- Ype (Ee-pah) Von Hengst, Co-Owner & Head Chef of Silver Diner Restaurants ([ype@silverdiner.com](mailto:ype@silverdiner.com))

**[INT 27] APPROVED Interview Notes**

**Cheryl Kollin  
MBA, Sustainability  
July 26, 2010**

**Contact info:** Email: [ckollin@verizon.net](mailto:ckollin@verizon.net),  
Phone: 240-491-1958

*Lots of best practices to look at and people to contact:*

- La Cocina in San Francisco: nonprofit kitchen incubator [BP 7, p. 47]
- ECO: new nonprofit in PG County; working with Crossroads farmers market on a new immigrant farmer incubator program with a Kellogg Foundation Grant; a spinoff of UMD; based on Growing Power in Milwaukee. ECO hosted urban farm summit in June.
- Brain Food in DC: 10 week after school cooking food program
- Common Good City Farm gardening and healthy eating in low-income neighborhood in DC:  
Youth garden at the National Arboretum; Kim Rush
- Crossroads Farmers Market: offers microloans for low income and new immigrant farmers and food related businesses. Contact: Michelle Levy
- Farm to school network: Andrea Northrup;
- Appalachian food ventures center—branding for products, etc.
- Rutgers Food Innovation Center [BP 8, p. 50] from product testing to packaging, marketing, safety, and commercial kitchen rental.
- In New Mexico, La Montanita Co-op: aggregates produce of small rural farmers that were far from markets; this co-op defined its "food shed" by following the boundary of their watershed; mapped out an efficient driving route where they pick up food from small farmers and drop off to markets; aggregating small farmers to get a better price; *this system might be used for transporting workers in Montgomery County.*
- Future Harvest CASA (based in MD and VA): more rural, loose affiliation of farmers. Education program; don't do common branding.

-Olympic Community Action Program (Olympic Peninsula of Washington State): job training and placement across two rural counties, provides transportation for trainees.

-Waterpenny Farm in Rappahannock County, VA owners Rachel Bynum and Eric Plaksin signed a 40-year lease with a farmer for farming on 10 acres of his land. Good model for succession farming.

*Ways to help farmers enhance their businesses:*

-Do an assessment of where they are: what do they need, etc.

-Matchmaking service for interns/apprentices and long-term farmers (like WWOOF).

-Use a free, user-friendly web platform with GIS mapping capabilities (such as Wiserearth) to create an asset map of producers.

*Other comments/suggestions:* Community outreach, education, etc.: going into communities: asking what they need [INT 22, p. 101].

**[INT 28] APPROVED Interview Notes**

**Kelly Carneal**

**Director of Rural Lands, 1000 Friends of Maryland**

**August 13, 2010**

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Website: <http://friendsofmd.org/>

**1000 Friends of MD in a nutshell:** From website, “A coalition of businesses, community and environmental groups dedicated to preserving what is best about Maryland and to encourage sensible growth.” Nonprofit, works to achieve urban revitalization and rural preservation: keep farmers farming (to preserve farmland). Does this through lobbying & policy, and figuring out farmers’ needs. “It is clear that urgent action is required to ensure that today’s farmers can keep farming and that the next generation can afford and want to”.

*Helping farmers:*

-Connect farmers to urban and suburban markets, as well as educate non-farming communities on the importance of local foods and the critical role farming plays in land preservation, the region's economy, and the heritage and history of the state.

-Farm Fest in October: geared towards urban and suburban community, promoting buying local.

*Challenges facing farmers:*

-Estate tax: If a farmer passes away and his children want to continue farming, they often can’t afford to because of the estate tax. Farms are valued based on what it would sell for commercially instead of what it’s worth for farming—farmers can’t afford to pay tax. MD has both an estate tax and inheritance tax (one of two states). Also, their estate tax is one of the highest. The estate tax issue is only one of many that needs to be addressed.

*Four goals of 1000 Friends of Maryland Keep Farmers Farming program:*

-Support healthy local food for our communities.

-Promote the importance of agriculture to Maryland's economy, heritage, and environment.

- Ensure continued funding for programs that protect agricultural lands.
- Advance programs, policies, and resources to help current farmers and new farmers stay on the land and remain profitable.

*Resources to check out and people to talk to:*

-MARBIDCO:<http://www.marbidco.org/home.html>-Baltimore County Center for Maryland Agriculture<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/environment/landpreservation/agcentermain.html>. New Director is Chris McCollum <cmccollum@baltimorecountymd.gov>-North County Preservation<http://www.northcountypreservation.org/>-Center for Farmland Policy Innovation<http://cffi.osu.edu/>-Senator Robert J. Garagiola <http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/05sen/html/msa13972.html>-American Farmland Trust <http://www.farmland.org/>-MD Department of Agriculture's Ag viability plan

**[INT 29] APPROVED Interview Notes**  
**Thomas Harr**  
**Executive Director, Family Services, Inc.**  
**August 18, 2010**

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Website: [www.familyservicesagency.org](http://www.familyservicesagency.org)

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 610 East Diamond Ave. Suite 100  
 Gaithersburg, MD 20877

***Family Services in a nutshell:*** Founded in 1908 as the first private social service agency in Montgomery County. Provides services in behavioral health, child development, education, and social services to the address needs of members of the community.

- Family Services has a commercial kitchen that could be used for program(s) of the Food Innovation Center. 14,000 sq ft-empty space next to it so there is plenty of room for expansion.
- There are many neighboring nonprofits: Dwelling Place, Teen and Young Adult Health Connection (TAYA), Guide, Inc. Community Clinic, Inc. (an FQHC), HomeFree-USA (foreclosure assistance), Identity – the Upcountry Youth Opportunities Center, Oakmont School, The Foundation School, and FSI's own Early Head Start, Healthy Families, Outpatient Mental Health, Psychiatric Rehabilitation.
- Huge diversity of people that come in because of the economic downturn. Form partnerships with all these programs.
- Diabetes/obesity, etc. is a problem among many clients of the health-related nonprofits.
- Right now the kitchen is being used to serve meals to people, but it is largely underutilized.

- Thomas would love to get a workforce development program similar to New Visions/New Ventures's Breadwinners program in Richmond, VA (<http://breadwinnersnvnv.org/>) that could work with teens and adults. FSI would need a grant for a food service manager. He is open to development of the kitchen as a kitchen/restaurant incubator or training facility for food service work if it would create jobs and sustainable income people, particularly for those in low-income households.

**[INT 30] APPROVED Interview Notes**

**Michelle McParland**

**Registered Dietician, Ph.D., Psychology, Eating Disorder/Nutrition Specialist**

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*Dr. McParland specializes in eating disorders.*

*Causes of obesity:*

-Cues in our environment that drive us to eat. Advertisements for unhealthy foods, vending machines in schools – these prompt us to eat. We are hardwired to prevent weight loss.

-Food supply is also a big concern: vending machines, fast food, and the lack of healthy affordable food options make obesity more problematic.

*Policies to reduce the rates of obesity/childhood obesity:*

-Community gardens and school gardens would be very helpful. Revamping the food that's available to kids. Also evidence that healthy food promotes good behavior and helps learning. **Schools** are critical.

*Food in schools:*

-No learning required to like the taste of sweets because we are hardwired to like sugar. There *is* learning involved in getting a taste for other foods: must develop a pallet to appreciate vegetables and other foods because of the taste and texture. Kids should be exposed to healthy foods from a young age to shape lifelong healthy eating habits.

-Gardens would put foods that are fresh and in-season (and therefore tasty) on kids' plates, making them more likely to learn to enjoy these foods.

-Psychologically too: **being involved in the production process** of growing, harvesting, etc. will make kids more the more they'll want to eat it. Taste tests, gardens, etc. all promote healthy eating.

*Organic food:* Most organic foods are more nutritious than non-organic. Pesticides are a problem for health. Recent study linked pesticides in foods to ADHD.



*Advice for developing/marketing a menu for school meals that's healthy and that kids will like/eat:*

-Good food. **Fresh food –if it's local, it's fresher and tastes better.** Then kids will eat more of it and learn to like it from a young age.

*Healthy foods that farmers should grow more of and people should eat more of:*

-Fruits and veggies, grow whatever is in season, so its fresh.

-Beans, protein sources. Poultry and meat are fine, but stick to free range and stuff and hormone free/antibiotic free.

-Whole grains (brown rice, oats, etc.) vs. refined carbohydrates: blood sugar and insulin levels.

## **Appendix IV. Additional Resources**

### **1. Agricultural Development [R1]**

a) Additional Best Practices of interest: Farm Incubator and Ag Workforce Development Programs

1. Maverick Farms's FIG (NC), <http://maverickfarms.com/fig.html>
2. Breeze Farm's PLANT (NC)  
<http://www.orangecountyfarms.org/PLANTatBreeze.asp>
3. Raft Swamp Farm's Incubation Program (NC):  
<http://www.raftswampfarms.org/home.html>
4. Nuestras Raices (MA), <http://www.nuestras-raices.org/>
5. The Farm School (MA), <http://www.farmschool.org/>
6. California FarmLink (CA),  
<http://www.californiafarmlink.org/joomla/index.php>
7. Land Stewardship Project (MN),  
<http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/fb/whatisfb.html>
8. Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) (WI),  
<http://www.mosesorganic.org/>
9. New Entry Sustainable Farming Program (MA),  
<http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/>
10. Angelic Organics Learning Center (IL), <http://www.learn-grow-connect.org/>
11. New Farmer Development Program (NY),  
<http://www.cenyc.org/greenmarket/nfdp>
12. (Urban Ag):Growing Power (WI), <http://www.growingpower.org/>

Additional immigrant farming programs resource:

<http://www.immigrantfarming.org/>

*Additional Maryland programs:*

Incubator/Training centers: ECO Offshoots, <http://www.ecoffshoots.org/> Baltimore County Center for Maryland Agriculture,  
<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/environment/landpreservation/agcentermain.html>

Farmer Network: <http://www.futureharvestcasa.org/>

Books: Nordahl, Darrin. Public Produce.

Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma*.

Book Reviews: Pollan, Michael. *The Food Movement, Rising*. New York Review of Books. June 10, 2010.

Websites: <http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/>  
<http://www.sare.org/>  
<http://attra.ncat.org/>

Additional Online Government Agricultural Resources:

USDA: <http://usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome>, <http://kyf.blogs.usda.gov/>  
Maryland: <http://www.mda.state.md.us/>, <http://marylandsbest.net/m>,  
<http://www.marbidco.org/>,

Montgomery

County: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agstmpl.asp?url=/content/ded/agservices/index.asp>

## *2. Food Innovation Center: Additional Kitchen Incubator programs and resources [R2]*

<http://www.acenetworks.org/>  
[http://www.breadwinnersnvnv.org/Taste buddies.html](http://www.breadwinnersnvnv.org/Taste_buddies.html)  
<http://www.lacocinasf.org/resources/resources-for-small-businesses/>  
<http://www.nbia.org/>

## *3. Marketing and Distribution: Additional Food Hub programs and resources [R3]*

Local Food Hub (Charlottesville, NC), <http://chofoodhub.blogspot.com/>  
Growers Collaborative (Nor Cal), <http://www.growerscollaborative.org/>  
Grasshoppers Distribution,  
[http://www.grasshoppersdistribution.com/about us.html](http://www.grasshoppersdistribution.com/about_us.html),  
Red Tomato (MA), <http://www.redtomato.org/>, Appalachian Sustainable  
Development (VA), <http://www.asapconnections.org/about.html>  
The Wedge Co-op (WI), <http://www.wedge.coop/about-the-wedge/>  
Intervale Food Hub (VT), <http://www.intervalefoodhub.com/>

### *Works Cited:*

Black, Jane. "Farm to Hub to Table: New Nonprofit Feeds Appetite for Local Food."  
Washington Post. August 26, 2009.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/25/AR2009082500861.html>,

## *4. Other Resources [R4]*

-Community gardens: <http://communitygarden.org/>

-Farm to school: [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org), US Government's "Chefs Move to Schools" Initiative ([letsmove.gov/chefs.php](http://letsmove.gov/chefs.php)),

-Miscellaneous: <http://www.idealist.org/>